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Editorial Board: WHITTAKER CHAMBERS, ROBERT EVANS, HUGO GELLERT, MICHAEL GOLD, LOUIS LOZOWICK, MOISSAYE J. OLGIN

CONTRIBUTORS:—Phil Bard, Emjo Basshe, Jacob Burck, Whittaker Chambers, Robert Cruden, Jack Conroy, Adolph Dehn, Robert Dunn, John Dos Passos, Kenneth Fearing, Ed Falkowski, Hugo Gellert, Eugene Gordon, Horace Gregory, William Gropper, Charles Yale Harrison, William Hernandez, Langston Hughes, Joseph Kalar, I. Klein, Melvin P. Levy, Louis Lozowick, H. H. Lewis, Norman Macleod, A. B. Magil, Scott Nearing, Myra Page, Harry Allan Potamkin, Paul Peters, Walter Quirt, Louis Ribak, Anna Rochester, E. Merrill Root, James Rorty, Martin Russak, Esther Shemitz, William Siegel, Upton Sinclair, Agnes Smedley, Otto Soglow, Herman Spector, Bennett Stevens, Joseph Vogel, Mary H. Vorse, Keene Wallis, Jim Waters, Art Young.

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JOSEPH NORTH

THE COMMUNISTS NOMINATE

Springtime, May, 1931: from Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C., first subterranean rumblings of fascist dictatorship. Fleets of Maru craft, Jap liners, nosing from American ports after nightfall loaded to the waterline, machine-guns, powder, cotton, death-gas chemicals. Another ten percent wage cut in steel. U. S. Steel eagerly up points on Wall Street ticker-tape, then the skids again. Two million dollars additional appropriated to deport more aliens from the U.S.A. in 1932. First time in American history tide of emigration overwhelms immigration. Wires jerk from Wall Street in preparation for Republican and Democratic quadrennial circuses. Ironclads swarming with Nipponese mercenaries rolling down the Sungari to Siberian border. Socialist Party haggles on beer. Machine-gun rat-rats death in Melrose Park, one month past Ford's Dearborn. Seven black boys behind steel bars in sunny Alabama wait for word from Supreme Court in Washington. Ragged veterans of Great War commandeer freight trains, swarm hungry over desert-lands, prairies, en route to imperial Washington—aid? Or death? Twelve million plebeians roaming for work—aid from Washington? Or death?

DEATH scrawled in big letters across the map of the U.S.A. today, 1932—May—Springtime. . . .

* * *

The sun had dipped behind the shed of the Georgia farm two hours before when the Negro sharecropper, Comrade X (his name must be withheld for obvious reasons) nervously peering up and down the roadway, stepped from his farm and headed toward town.

He glanced at the silhouettes of young corn, palegreen in moonlight: heeded the mule's stirring in the stoop-shouldered barn: waved farewell to seven silent dark figures on the steps of his shack, and disappeared around the bend in the road. He carried one clean shirt in a package tied about his belt, and now and then bent down to flick dust from the cuffs of his seven year old Sunday suit.

He passed an obscure bend in the railway road-bed in the drab Georgia flatlands; thirty miles out from Atlanta. A Negro had been lynched—burned to death—here thirty-two years ago. "A smart nigger" whose corpse was discovered charred across a smouldering pile of ties.

This murder, No. X in the list of 5,167 American lynchings since 1872, was mentioned in a casual line in the Atlanta Constitution:

"Unrecognizable negro found." White foremen on the railway read the line and whispered, "One smart nigger less."

That lynching occurred in 1900: today, May 17, 1932, the sharecropper, Comrade X, carefully took a wideabout route around his landowner's mansion. His head swarmed with the Communist Nominating Convention, 1,200 miles off, toward which he headed. Carefully folded in his inside coat pocket—a month old copy of the *Daily Worker*. The sight of a long train of freight cars, the locomotive plaintively sounding the siren—remember the Scottsboro boys! When the train turned the bend, he leaped forward, his long, black body pounding upward, and swung himself onto the freight. Reaching Chattanooga, he made his way to the appointed meeting place, and boarded the bus with the group of Southern workers chosen to go to the Communist convention.

* * *

(These facts he related to me in the Coliseum while the forest of red banners waved to and fro, like banners of an approaching army: while a Negro stood on the platform before the massed tiers of 15,000 heads, black and white, and accepted the candidacy of vice-president on the Communist ticket. The Negro on the Platform, James W. Ford, was the grandson of that Negro who was lynched a few miles from the home of Comrade X. I glanced at Comrade X's face: lean, bony, the cheekbones high, like an East Indian, because the skin was drawn close to the scalp, the glowing eyes sunken).

I spoke to the other delegates: the 100%ers from Kentucky, who told me in their Elizabethan English of the terror drag-nets they had eluded to reach here: the Norwegian farmer from North Dakota, lanky, icy-eyed; the machinist from Des Moines, "my people got there in covered wagons and settled": to the blue-scarred miners from Western Pennsylvania pits, Slavic, narrow-eyed, built like potato-sacks: to dozens of the 930 delegates from forty-three states. Flavor of America—you can't say, "Why don't you go back where you came from?" to these people—for only thirty-five delegates were born in other lands.

* * *

I ask Comrade X—"Wasn't it hard getting here?" "Hahd?" he asks, shrugging his lean shoulders, "Hahd? A reckon we got here lak homing pigeons . . ."

Like homing pigeons!

* * *

We had arrived on the "Red Special": awakened at 1:30 a. m. in Dayton, Ohio, by shouts—"We want Foster and Ford!" Two hundred workers had waited five hours, flagging every train, seeking the "Red Special". Chicago: it doesn't flash on you like

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Manhattan's cliffs and canyons. It sneaked up, stealthily: the Indiana plains began to thrust steel mills into your face in the dawn: the flat farmlands suddenly snarled with the black teeth of smokestacks—and then, Chicago. Chicago, I thought, and the jarring wheels seemed to sing," Capone Melrose Park Haymarket raceriots 1919 South Side steel packing steel packing machine guns Insull Capone Capone Capone . . . "

Chicago: cameramen perched on ladders. The *Internationale* rises oddly in the blackened station. The delegates warmly grasp the welcoming hands of workmen and workingwomen (you immediately note more Negro faces, many more Negro workers comparatively than ever before) in the crowd greeting you. A tall slim Negro in a cap sliding over his right ear, vigorously waving a red banner with a hammer and sickle.

* * *

William Z. Foster.

Communist candidate for president.

"The most famous man in America outside of Who's Who" J. P. Morgan's *New York Post* termed him that day in 1930 when the trio of Tammany judges sent him up for six months on Welfare Island. His crime? He had said, his long forefinger pointing the way, "Then let 'em go," to the 110,000 jobless on Union Square, March 6, leading the march on the City Hall for relief.

"Foster for president". Three years of schooling. Son of a Taunton, Mass., cab washer. In the shop at the age of ten. Type-founder: factory-worker: steam engineer: sculptor's apprentice: steamfitter: railroad man: street car motorman: longshoreman: farmer: sailor.

"Foster for president." 400,000 steel workingmen abandoned the furnaces in 1919; revolt: "We want to live like men!": Foster, their leader. 45,000 coal miners of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio, marching under the banners of the National Miners Union of the Trade Union Unity League, in 1931: Foster, secretary of the T.U.U.L., on the field of battle twenty-four hours out of every day during the long, bitter war with Andrew Mellon's pool-room and slum-begotten guerillas.

"Foster for president"—the A. F. of L. Mussolinis tried to put him on the spot in this same Chicago in 1926 at Carmen's Hall. The gunman missed aim as Foster, erect on the platform, taught the principles of the Trade Union Educational League, against the brigandage of the A. F. of L. mercenaries. The A. F. of L. has good reason to hate him: this lean-faced, keen-eyed working-class leader—"They couldn't buy him off."

"Foster for president."

* * *

He stood before the massed 15,000: men, women and children straining forward in their chairs, hanging on every word.

(Outside, Chicago beer fleets delivered their ware while blue-coat sentries guarded: Chicago's Insull, Midwest Utilities, Rock of Gibraltar among investments, crumbling, collapsed under water: Chicago, gearing up for the Republican and Democratic conventions).

He stood and spoke: "I accept the nomination of the Communist Party for president of the United States. I shall try to be worthy of this high honor. One thing is certain . . ."—the delegates of the American working-class, silent as a glacier, heeding every syllable "before long a Communist will stand at the head of the American government, a Soviet government."

Strange, powerful prophetic words . . . bourgeois newspapermen at the press table shiver a little . . . "the American government," they jot it down. The representative of the Associated Press involuntarily turns to look at the delegates behind him. Involuntarily also he cringes as they surge forward, a tidal wave: on toward the platform: Foster rode high in the air on the shoulders of powerful workmen, white and Negro. They bore him around the hall simultaneously with Ford.

The red banners shook like sapling trees, trembling in a great wind. Negro and white, Latin from Florida and Colorado, Finn from Minnesota and New England, 100%ers from two score states, saw the dawn of a new world in the proceedings.

"Foster and Ford!"

"Foster and Ford! Foster and Ford!" the echoes thundered as they bore the two men around the auditorium, workmen's children, women and men, clutching up at them as they passed by.

* * *

Ford.

For vice president.

"The Communist Party," the taciturn, big-handed Hathaway, manager of the Communist Election Campaign National Commit-

tee, declared, "has decided to recommend an action by this convention never before taken by any national political party. We propose as candidate for vice-president of the United States a Negro worker, a leader of the oppressed Negro people."

(Were there earthquakes at that moment in the Black Belt? Did the courthouse in Scottsboro, Alabama, fall to its foundations?)

Caucasian and Negro wild-faced in joy: the red banners again waving like saplings in a hurricane . . .

"Black and white, unite and fight . . ."

"Black and white, unite and fight . . ." the children chanted in the galleries.

"We make this proposal not with a vote-catching motive. We do it because it corresponds to the fundamental position of the Communist Party and of those who support the Communist Party on the Negro question . . . we stand for complete unconditional equality for the Negroes . . . not equality in some narrow limited sense, but for complete economic, political and social equality . . . we stand for a solid fighting front of all toilers Negro and white, to force the granting of such equality now . . . to march forward to the emancipation of all those oppressed by the yoke of capitalist rule . . ."

A reporter for the Negro bourgeois *Chicago Whip* tried to sneer but succeeded only in trembling: the Negro delegates sat upright, straight as a bolt, some of them dabbing at their eyes: the white workers hearkening to every word . . .

"In the first place it is our demand that the land of the Southern white landlords, for years tilled by Negro tenant farmers, be confiscated and turned over to the Negroes. This is the only way to ensure economic equality for tenant farmers. . . ." (Not in vain did you fall before the massed guns of the sheriff's mob, Ralph Gray, of Camp Hill, Ala., sharecropper). " . . . we propose to break up the present state boundaries and to establish the state unity of territory in what is known as the 'Black Belt' where the Negroes constitute the overwhelming majority . . . we demand that in this territory, Negroes be given complete right of self-determination as they see fit, the right to separate from the United States if they wish . . . with these demands for Negroes, with the revolutionary white and Negro workers in the forefront of the struggle, the unity of the white workers, small farmers and Negro masses can be soon established . . ."

Ford for vice-president!

James W. Ford, born in Pratt City, Ala. Son of Lymon Ford, 35 years a coal miner and steel worker in the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Co. domain. His grandfather lynched in Gainesville, Ga.—his crime—a "smart nigger". A man, a workingman, who spoke out against the new slavery . . . they found him, a charred remnant of a human being, burned to death on a pile of smouldering cross-ties. . .

Ford . . . at 13 toiling on the railroads at Ensley, Ala., blacksmith helper: machinist helper: laborer before a blast furnace side by side with his father:

Ford . . . working his way through high school in three years . . . enlisted in the United States army during his last year at Fisk University. . .

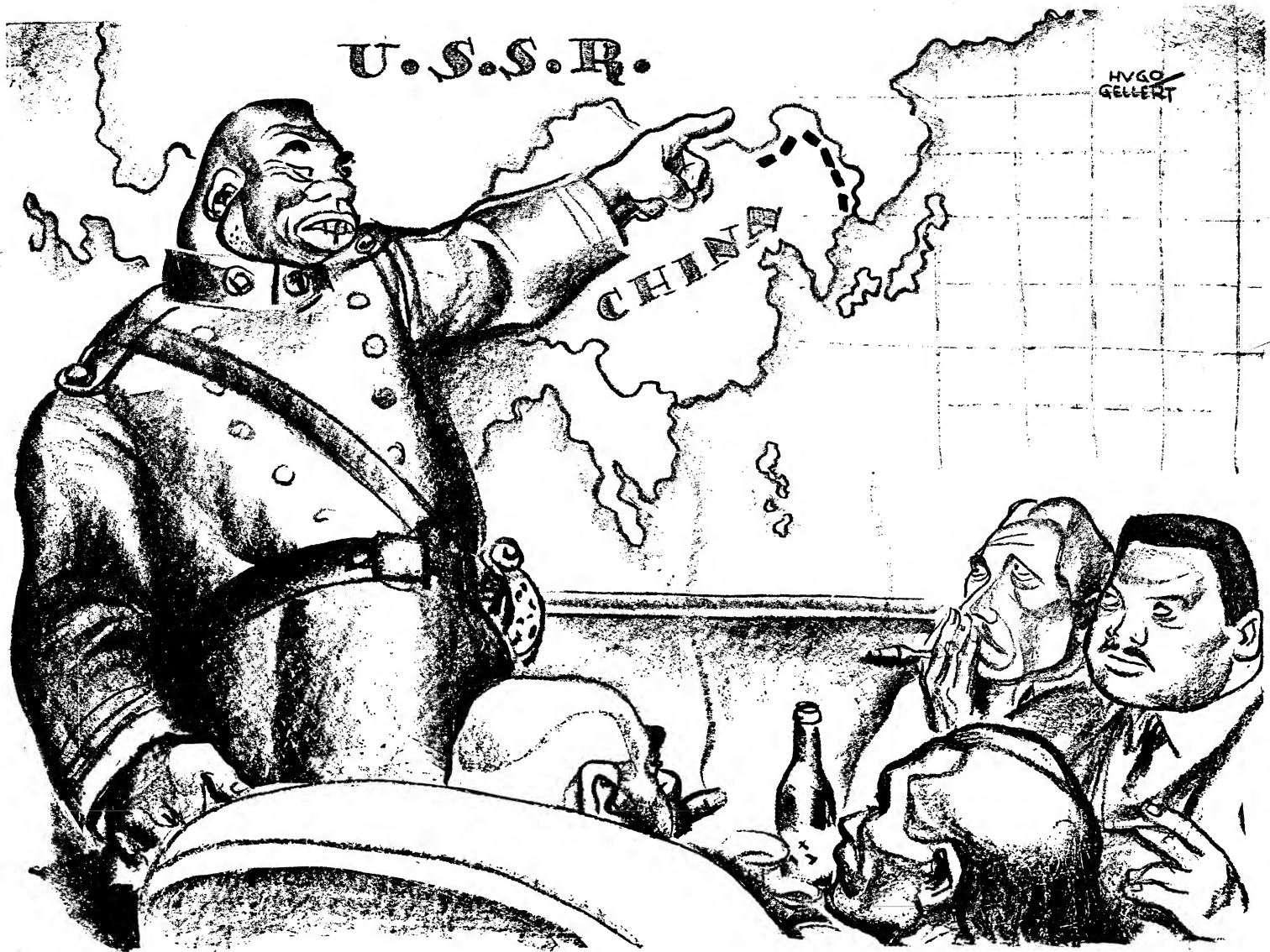
Ford . . . in charge of the radio and telegraph communication for the 85th Brigade of the 92nd Division in France . . . organizing protest meetings against jimcrowism and mistreatment of Negro soldiers . . . especially frame-up charges of rape against soldiers in his outfit. . .

Ford . . . in 1919 discharged from the army . . . jobless . . . no work to be found . . . finally a job in a mattress factory . . . then in the post-office as parcel post dispatcher . . . delegate to the Chicago Federation of Labor from Postal Workers Union No. 1 . . . fighter against speed-up, and bureaucracy in the union . . . fired from his job for militant working-class activity.

Ford . . . Communist Party member in 1926 . . . delegate to the Fourth World Congress of the Red International of Labor Unions in Moscow . . . elected to the Executive Board and General Council . . . delegate to the World Congress of the Communist International in 1928; and to the World Congress of the League against Imperialism in Hamburg and now member of its Executive Committee. . .

Ford . . . arrested in 1929 in New York City for leading a demonstration against the shooting of natives in Haiti by marines . . . toured Europe on behalf of the Scottsboro boys during 1931, while editor of the *Negro Worker* of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro workers of which he was secretary . . .

Ford . . . deported from Austria in 1931 by the socialist chief of police . . . Ford, member of the Political Bureau of the Central



"EVERYTHING IS IN READINESS, GENTLEMEN!"

Hugo Gellert

Committee of the Communist Party of the United States of America.

Ford for vice-president. "Symbol of our program . . ."

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF AMERICA
A NEGRO . . ."

* * *

I sought out Comrade X while Ford was speaking. He told me of secret meetings in the dead of night—off in the woods, of share-cropper guards who must keep the vigil which means life or death to the gathered share-croppers. He stopped for a moment when Ford said, "In this so-called democratic United States, which is at the peak of capitalist culture, the white ruling classes carry out the most shameless oppression of 12,000,000 Negroes, jim-crow and persecute them and on every hand deny them the most elementary human rights. Negroes exist as a nation of "social outcasts" in this country. This is the status of Negroes, seventy years after so-called emancipation."

"Emancipation," muttered Comrade X. "Emancipation." Later he told me more of his story: forty-nine years of sharecropping; six children waiting for his return in the three room frame shack that's home. He introduced me to his friend, Claude Patterson, father of Haywood Patterson, one of the Scottsboro boys. He mopped his forehead with the back of his hand as he spoke. His face, also lean, bony, gray streaked with black in his hair, his hands long and black hovered like crows while he spoke: "Oh, it's hahd to live down there, comrade", he said. "Awful hahd. You jes about lak a rabbit mongst a gang o' guns." He told of his boys—his first-born, awaiting death on the electric chair.

"My boy is treated awful brutish . . . prison guard keeps him

in cell eight feet long and four feet wide . . . terrorizin' the boy showin' him the 'lectric chair every day . . ."

He has five more children at home in Chattanooga. They must do what is called "living" on the \$4.40 a week wage he gets from the steel plant in which he works "in nothin' but overall, no shirt, 'cause the sweat run down you too heavy."

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People "aimed to catch him"; "William Pickens and five Chattanooga preachers" tried the job. After hearing their story he showed them the door. "Ah ain't interested in your line o' talk" he said, "Mr. Pickens, you can show me where the sun rises and where it goes down, but you cain't talk me out o' believing in the International Labor Defense and the Reds." He shook his head, the hawks of hands nervously flying. "The I. L. D. was more advanced to me. Even if my boy dies I know they made a fight to save him. Big fight . . . and I'll back them even if I gotta die doin' it." He wiped his forehead again with the back of his hand.

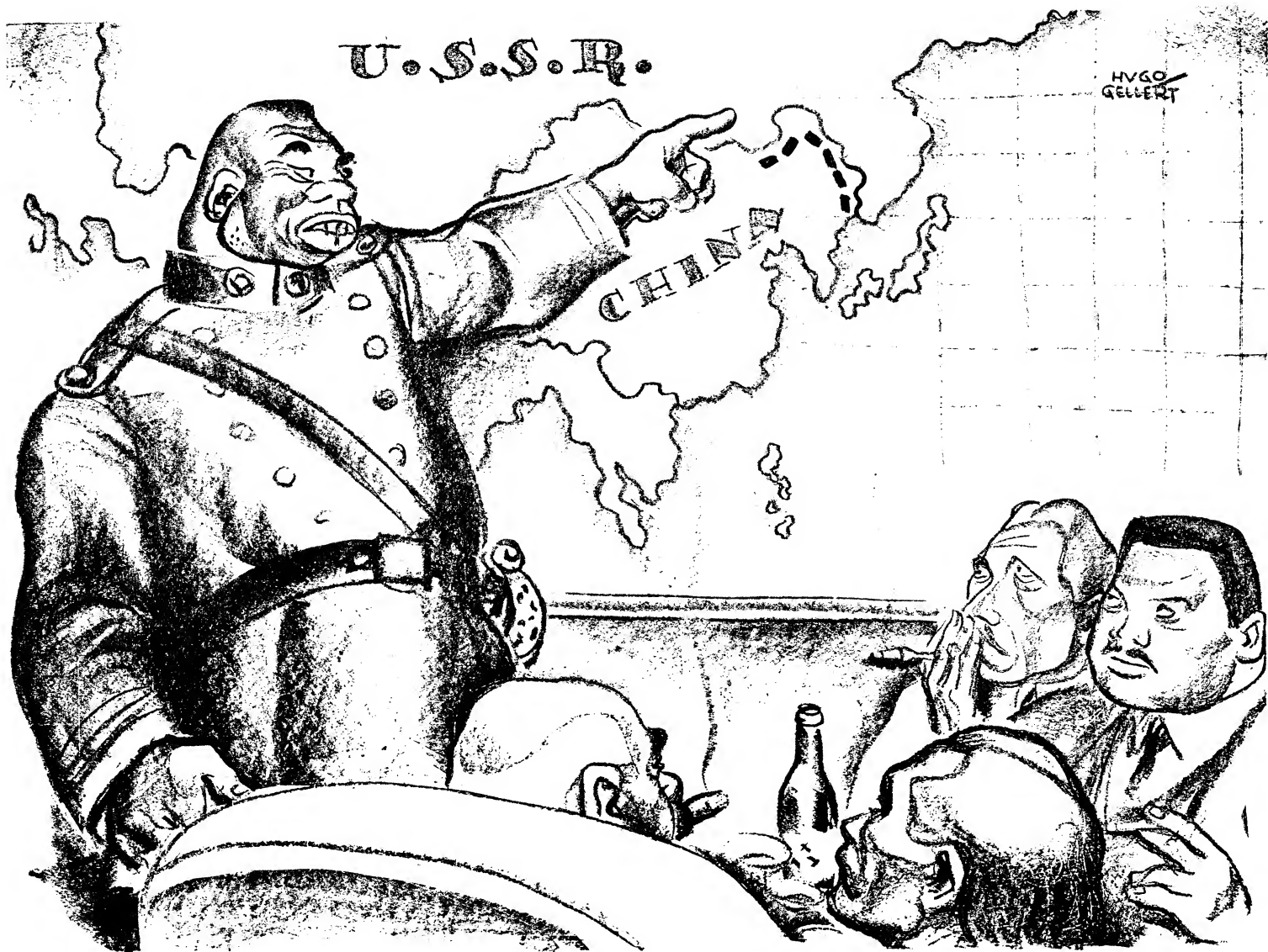
"I know this" he said, while the children in the galleries chanted, "Black and white unite to fight"; "Even if my boy Haywood dies, the fight the I. L. D. and the Communist Party made for him, means my youngest won't be as like to be strung up to a roof when he grows up."

* * *

Blood-red banners stretched from girder to girder in the convention hall. The slogan in three-foot high letters cried out: VOTE COMMUNIST FOR THESE DEMANDS!

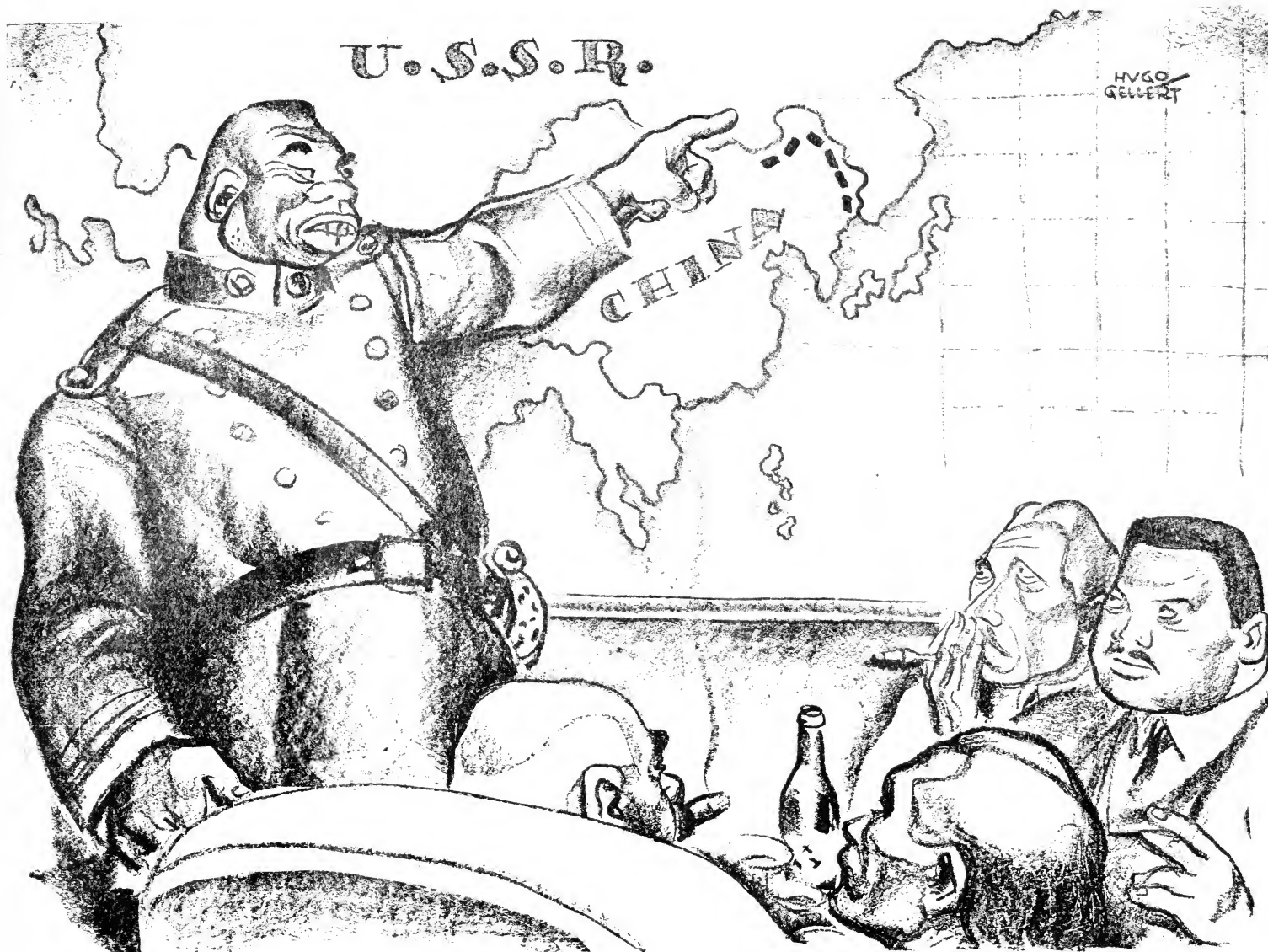
1. UNEMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL INSURANCE AT THE EXPENSE OF THE STATE AND EMPLOYERS

(What do you say to that, you 15,000,000 jobless, daily watch-



"EVERYTHING IS IN READINESS, GENTLEMEN!"

Hugo Gellert



"EVERYTHING IS IN READINESS, GENTLEMEN!"

Hugo Gellert

ing the cheeks hollow into death of your children, your wives? . . . you on the headline that curls like a questionmark across America from coast to coast, what do you say? . . . you dying amid the pyramids of wheat burned to keep prices high in the Pit, what do you say?)

2. AGAINST HOOVER'S WAGE CUTTING POLICY

(You, reading that little white sign tacked on the wall near the blast furnace . . . "Due to present conditions . . . wage cut of 10% starting immediately"—what do you say? . . . you American workers on the job slashed 60% in wages since the Wall Street earthquake November, 1929, what do you say? You staggered workers who heeded Messrs Green and Hoover in their agreement "No strikes, no wage-cuts"—what of that demand?)

3. EMERGENCY RELIEF FOR THE POOR FARMERS WITHOUT RESTRICTIONS BY THE GOVERNMENT AND BANKS: EXEMPTION OF POOR FARMERS FROM TAXES, AND FROM FORCED COLLECTION OF RENTS AND DEBTS.

(You, man of the hoe, the man they ask in Congress to plow every third row under . . . what do you say? You of the countryside, you farmers of England, Ark., starving while across the fields they're burning wheat to keep prices high in the Pit . . . what about it?)

4. EQUAL RIGHTS FOR THE NEGROES AND SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE BLACK BELT

(Nation of Negroes in the United States . . . 12,000,000 in the field and foundry . . . "first to be fired and last to be hired" . . . jimcrow and lynch law . . . Scottsboro, Camp Hill . . . the rope and faggot . . . the bullet . . . the noose for the upright head . . . your answer?)

5. AGAINST CAPITALIST TERROR: AGAINST ALL FORMS OF SUPPRESSION OF THE POLITICAL RIGHTS OF THE WORKERS

(Tom Mooney, dean of class war prisoners, staring across the blue waters at San Quentin, peeling potatoes sixteen years for the guards . . . framed-up . . . the 'plunderbund' got you . . . and you, J. B. McNamara, and you Centralia boys . . . and you 100% Americans of the Kentucky mines . . . gun-thugs and machine guns when you meet . . . when you talk organization . . . what about it?)

6. AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR: FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE AND OF THE SOVIET UNION

(You, world war vets, rotting off in hunger, fighting across country for the bonus "back wages" . . . you kids playing ball on the lot in a thousand American cities, cannon fodder for the next war . . . you haven't heard of the secret orders to print 32,000,000 draft blanks? . . . you haven't heard of the war plans . . . the buzzards' heads are close together . . . the Japanese troops are swinging on to the Soviet borders . . . Wall Street encouragement, munitions from New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Newport News, Frisco, Seattle . . . war . . . war . . . war . . .)

Vote Communist for these demands?

You millions out there—what about it, fellow workers?

* * *

Outside the nominating convention hall, you could almost see—as the words of the workingmen delegates portrayed them—the fifteen million ragged Americans: walking up and down the streets in the eternal hunger-picket, seeking jobs, hunting bread in ash-cans for their families. You could see the bent backs of the "leetle cheelderen" in the Colorado beet fields, "moving like snakes through the beets in the hot, burning sun," as Moses Rodriguez, fifteen year old delegate from the striking Colorado agrarian workers said softly from the tribunal. You could see the vivid Latin faces of the Florida tobacco workers calling for "Defense of the USSR" under the muzzles of the Vigilance Committee guns . . . the coal-streaked faces of the miners emerging from the pit to ignite in rebellion here . . . their families at home living on herbs and flour . . . could see the monster millions of American workers seething forward and back, like sands on the beach before giant waves. And to these millions Foster said,

" . . . in making these immediate demands, the Communist Party never forgets that its tasks is to organize the workers for their revolutionary goal . . . such measures constitute only relief, not cure for the ills from which the toilers suffer . . . capitalism must be overthrown, the industries and land socialized, exploitation abolished, and Socialism established . . . that is the only cure for poverty, unemployment, economic crisis, fascism, war and the rest of the miseries of capitalism. The Communist Party fights to establish a workers and farmers government, it struggles" and here

the tumult rose to a cataclysmic pitch," ever and always for a United Soviet States of America."

* * *

During a few moments recess in the convention I cornered Ford, and on behalf of *New Masses* asked his opinion of the role of sympathetic writers and artists in this period . . . the tasks of the John Reed Clubs . . . of those intellectuals whose eyes are on Soviet Russia, not too purblind to see that the workingmen of the world are rising. . . .

A broad-shouldered man, Ford bent forward. He said, "The *New Masses* must try to develop a corps of proletarian writers out of the raw material in a thousand cities and farms of the country. The dearth of these today is a great shortcoming on the cultural field of our struggle." He spread his palms. "Among the Negroes, for instance, who is there besides Langston Hughes?" he asked. "Particularly among the Negro proletariat will we discover those talents necessary for building up the intellectual opposition to the traitorous leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and similar groups. Many honest intellectuals among the Negroes do not yet recognize the role of the Pickens, Whites, Du Boises, the McKinneys, Millers, Calvins, and Schuylers. True, the Scottsboro case has been the beginning of the end for these turncoats; but they still possess great potentialities for misleadership.

"Take the war propaganda being carried on among the Negro masses today"—he spoke angrily. "Our friend Pickens, a hearty endorser of the propaganda that Japanese imperialism represents the interests of the darker races against the whites. Deliberately attempting to poison the Negro masses against the idea of unity of white and black toilers: a traitorous plan of lining up the Negro masses in the U.S.A. against the Soviet Union—the only country in the world where the national question has been solved; where the right of self-determination was advanced to 182 various nationalities, many of them non-white races; where complete equality obtains. I have been in the Soviet Union and have seen this; and it was then that I understood absolutely that the right of self-determination must be applied in the American Black Belt: that the Negro toilers must gain the right to control this land, this territory, and remove white ruling class domination, the real basis of the exploitation and suppression of the Negro masses."

"But to get back to the need for proletarian writers," he said, "the Scottsboro case particularly has shown the tremendous need for combatting writers of the prostituted press, particularly among the Negroes. Those lying articles of Pickens and Walter White and that gang, saying that the responsibility for the Alabama lynch-verdicts is due to the propaganda of revolutionary working-class organizations and not to the ruling-class murderers . . . that's got to be fought day in and day out: and not only on the arena of the factory, street and home, but on the printed page, which has such great power today. We must build our own press: develop our own writers: portray our own program clearly, simply, effectively, so that the power of the high-priced liars of the bourgeois press is completely combatted."

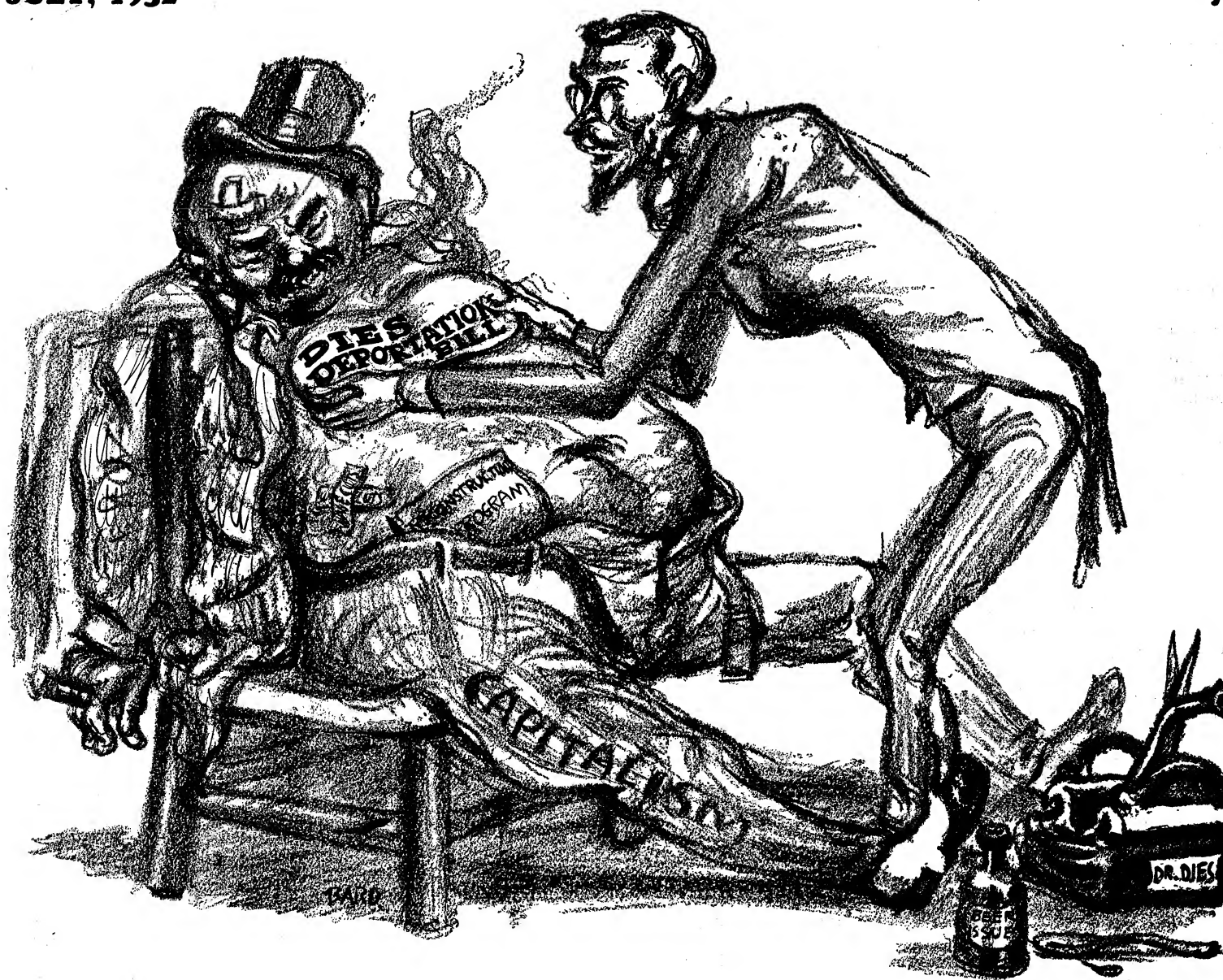
In the latter hours of the convention I sought out Foster: his lean face, haggard but lighted with enthusiasm. "What do you think of it?" He inclined his head toward the delegates. "Ever see such spirit?"

I asked the same question I had asked Ford. Foster shrugged his shoulders. "It's a great task they have . . . a big job . . ."

"We must recognize," he said, "that the chief aims of bourgeois culture, so far as it is directed toward the working-class are to develop the workers into robots who uncomplainingly accept whatever standards of life and work the owners of industry see fit to grant them.

"In so far as this culture is directed to the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, it results in a mass production of capitalist intellectual robots. In no country is culture so debased by capitalism as in the United States. This the John Reed Clubs must recognize and battle against. In no land in the world is it so sterile, hypocritical, colorless, lifeless.

"Proletarian writers must be developed to combat America's capitalist writers, engaged in trying to convince the working class what a glorious thing it is to be a wage slave. They must expose and put to endless shame those artists and poets so busy glorifying Heinz's pickles and the advertising pages of the *Saturday Evening Post*: those dramatists and musicians who are cooking up patriotic slush and idiotic sex stories to divert the masses from their troubles, and the hopeless monotony of capitalist life: those scientists trying to prove the unity of science and religion."



Phil Bards

"THERE'S TOO MUCH RED IN YOUR BLOOD, SIR."

Somebody from the presidium came into the room. "You're wanted out on the platform, Comrade Foster" he said. In the hall tremendous cheering. Foster jumped up, but halted as he was going out the door:

Outside they were clamoring, "Foster and Ford—Foster and Ford."

A Chicago delegate had invited us to his home the second day of the convention. "The light's been turned off," he said, "But if you comrades don't mind that, we got a couple of beds. Might as well make use of them before we're turned out completely."

We spoke of the things all workers talk about: wages, the wife and kids, what there is to eat at home, what the goddamned government's doing about it, and, since 1917, about Soviet Russia.

The sharecropper, a husky, round-faced Negro with a booming bass voice, told his story. The candle light flickered high as it approached its last inch, and then darkness. The sharecropper went on telling his story. We couldn't see each other. Only there were red glows in the dark from our pipes.

The Kentucky delegate spoke. "The gun thugs," he said, "they gun thug walking half a mile off. They don't like to get outta wears steel vests. When they walks they clink. You can hear a their cahs. They won't talk unless they got the draw on you." He recounted the stories we had learned too well: of Harry Simms' death: the shooting at Evarts: the flux, 'bleeding at the bowels': the walls with cracks (you can call youah dog through): the Red Cross that feeds scabs but not strikers—one falling under the category of an Act of God and the other existing without God's grace.

The Jugo-Slav tamped his pipe. He spoke without articles: like all Jugo-Slavs. "It's getting to be like in Jugo-Slavia" he said. "My brother write me from there. He told of friend who was caught distributin' leaflets for Reds. They took friend to police station: they beat him with leather whips: they beat him with fists: they beat him till he drop on floor. But he wouldn't tell who his friends were in Communist Party. You know what they do then?"

"They throw water on him: bring him to. Then," and his voice fell in the darkness to a bare whisper, "they say they give him one more chance. He keep his mouth shut. They take razor. And swish: they cut. He give one scream: finish." He resumed his pipe. "In America now: almost same."

In the morning we shook hands again.

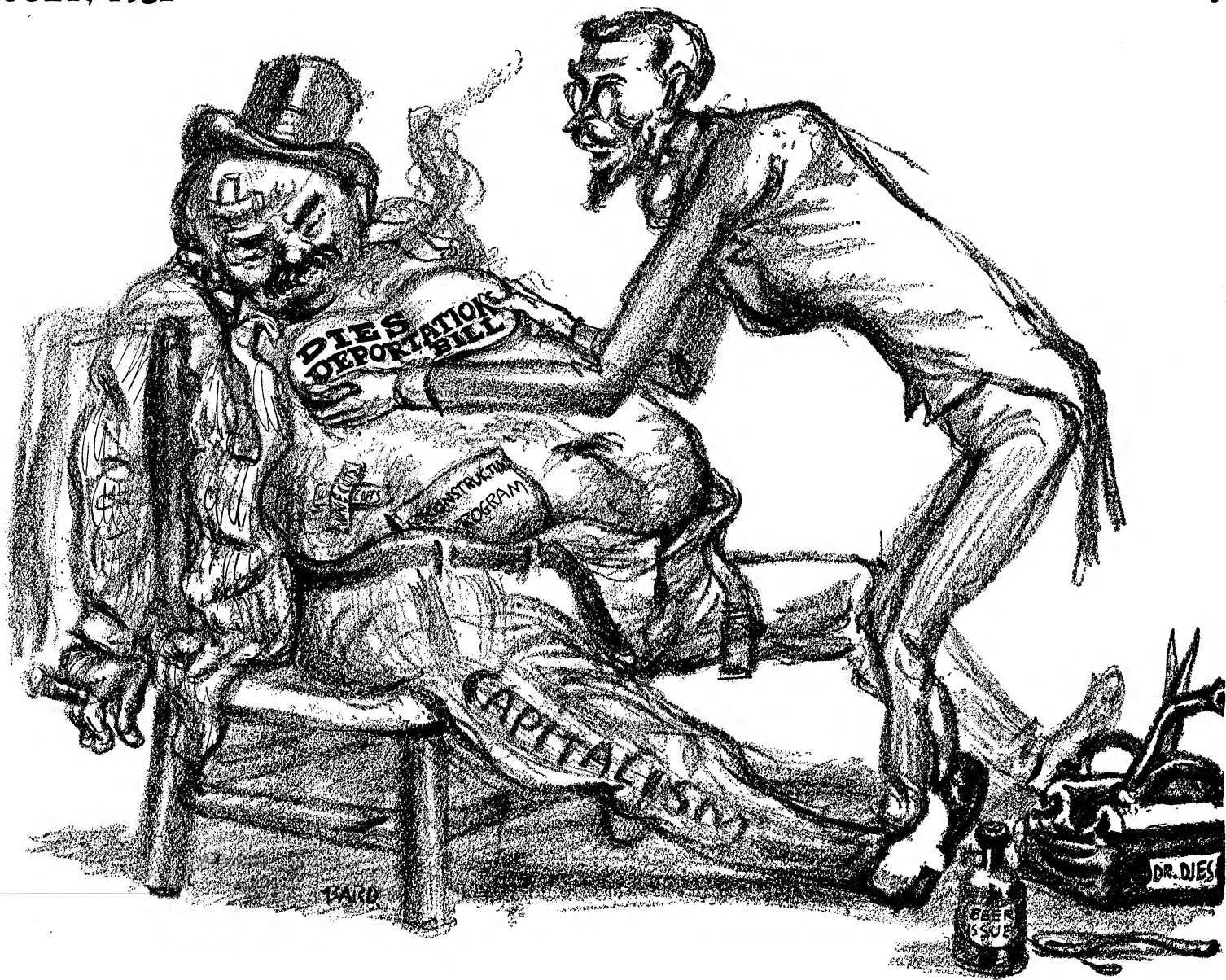
"Good-bye, comrade" the Kentuckian said; and he left to make his way to the Cumberland hills, where the gun-thugs clink when they walk.

"Good-bye, comrade," the Jugo-Slav steel worker said with a grin, "I remember dam' good. Send me letter sometime."

They shook hands all around once more, and left for various points of the compass of class-struggle. Each sported his red delegate's badge on his lapel; even though the convention had adjourned.

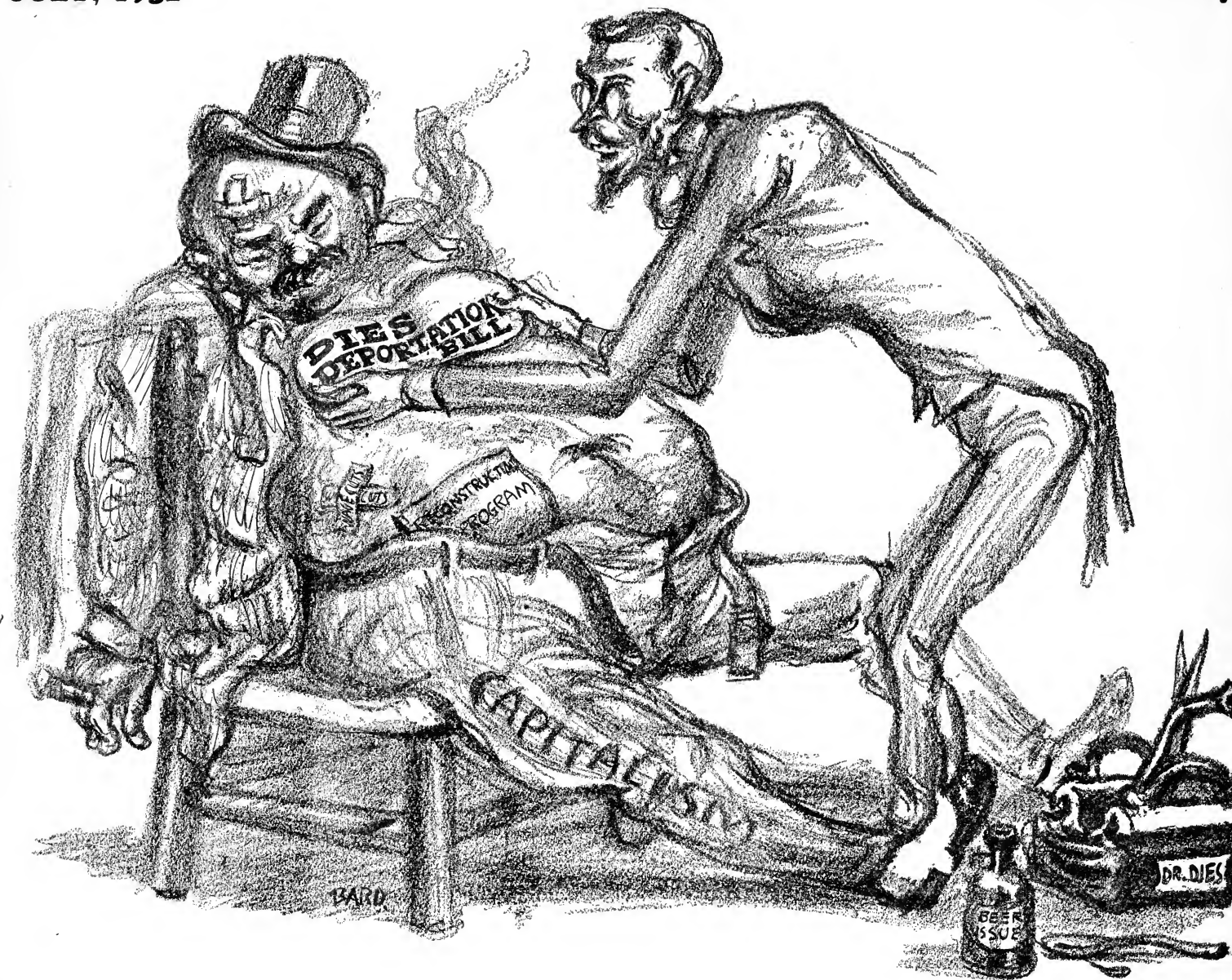
On the train back to New York I thought of them. They had made their way here "lak homing pigeons" Comrade X had said.

Like homing pigeons cleaving the air in a bee-line they were returning with the message of the Communist convention east—west—north—and south.



"THERE'S TOO MUCH RED IN YOUR BLOOD, SIR."

Phil Bards



"THERE'S TOO MUCH RED IN YOUR BLOOD, SIR."

Phil Bards

ROBERT KENT

REVOLUTIONISTS IN WAR

Among my possessions is a yellow document called by army men a "bob-tail", or a "kick". It is a certificate of my dishonorable discharge from the United States army for disobedience of orders. I refused to accept a uniform, rifle and bayonet as preliminaries for avenging the "rape of little Belgium." Besides the "kick", I also received a sentence of twenty-five years at hard labor in the United States Disciplinary Barracks at Leavenworth.

"Would you go to prison again," I am frequently asked, "if conscripted in another war?" Others say, "Will you try to leave the country?" With cannons disembowelling China and the Japanese sweeping on to the border of Soviet Siberia, such inquiries take on an immediate significance. It may not be long before we in America will again be asked to register our names not, mind you, to be conscripted, but, as Professor Wilson put it to "be chosen selectively to defend our honor, our peace, our women"—in short, everything except the greed of our capitalists.

It will be no surprise to me if the next President plus Congress, blessed by the church and endorsed by liberals, declares a holy war against Japan to keep the door in China "open" for American investments, or against the Russian Workers Republic to prove that only capitalists have the right to own the machines and factories. In either case what will I do?

I can best answer, I believe, by evaluating the approach, as well as the achievement, of those of us who tried seriously to frustrate the imperialist war in 1917.

How many escaped over the Mexican border and thereby thumbed their noses at the draft I do not know. Their number, I understand, was considerable, and was composed mainly of men with strong German sympathies. Their objection to the war was not rooted in class-consciousness, but in Teutonic chauvinism. In various Mexican cities they were assisted financially by German consuls. There were, however, a number of class-conscious revolutionists who braved considerable danger in escaping from America and underwent hardship as well in the southern Republic. But as a means of arousing the working class against imperialist war their tactics were obviously wrong. By leaving the country the class-conscious revolutionists cut themselves from the masses. One must remember, however, that during the World War correct revolutionary tactics were made almost impossible by the confusion, as well as the treachery, of the Socialist leadership.

On the other hand, approximately five thousand men refused to serve in the army and made no attempt to avoid arrest. Among these, too, revolutionists were in the minority. More than ninety percent disclaimed any political affiliation, and with few exceptions also disclaimed interest in social problems. Their souls or consciences, they claimed, belonged to Jesus, and if they were to sully them by committing murder contrary to Christian teaching, they might hasten their earthly demise while gravely imperiling their candidacy for the abodes of the Blessed.

Not all of these could agree as to what Christianity demanded of them. About thirty-five hundred, including Hoover's fellow-Quakers, found that by helping others kill, through accepting non-combatant service, they did not inflict any blemish upon their own souls. Officers rather liked them; they called them "sensible conscientious objectors". But then there were others, religious men, vegetarians perforce, who claimed that killing animals for food, assisting others to take life, or even taking medicine to kill a tape worm was murder in the eyes of God. These, with others refusing service of any sort, were considered by the officers as "intolerable conscientious objectors."

Then there were humanitarians and pacifists who believed that both war and capitalism could be destroyed by passive resistance; and also a small group of individualists who maintained that under no circumstances had society the right to conscript them for military or industrial service.

Perplexed and irritated by these various types, the military authorities were, in addition, confronted by a small group of I.W. W.'s and left-wing Socialists who stated that they would gladly shoulder a rifle in a class-war against capitalism. This staunch

attitude aroused curiosity among some officers and even their sympathy.

"Do you blame us for sending you to prison after saying you'd fight to overthrow the American government?" a high ranking officer asked, aggrieved.

"Not at all," was the retort. "When we overthrow capitalism, we'll treat you exactly as you treat us. You are teaching us a lesson."

One general in charge of a cantonment said frankly:

"It hurts me to have to treat brave men like you in this manner. Why won't you put on the uniform? If I had a regiment of men like you, willing to die for an ideal, I wouldn't need a whole army to wipe out the Huns."

This general has since died. Were he living, he would probably know that the revolutionary proletariat throughout the world is building not regiments but whole armies of men and women who are willing to die in order to obliterate capitalism from the face of the earth.

For the most part, however, officers were infuriated by the revolutionary type of conscientious objector. Loaded rifles were pressed to the backs of some of us in the hope that we would then obey military commands. Some received bayonet wounds, and despite the hurt, were proud of those scars. Two I knew died under persecution. All of us received heavy sentences.

Averse to using the term political or class-war prisoners, military authorities boldly, if not too discerningly, placed all war resisters in two categories. Those opposed to taking life under any circumstance, even when personally attacked, were termed "sincere conscientious objectors." Those who would serve in a working-class war or would kill to defend their wives, daughters or sisters against rape were classed as "insincere conscientious objectors."

Between four and five hundred objectors finally landed in prison at Leavenworth. Of these about a hundred had been willing to accept some sort of non-combatant service but were sent to prison, it was later explained, because of muddled military orders.

Among the first to arrive were ten or so left-wing socialists, all, including the writer, from Minnesota. Otto Wangerin, railway machinist, now active in the revolutionary ranks in the mid-west, was with us; Charles, I am using a fictitious name in order not to imperil his present position, soap-boxer, lecturer and engineer; Bill Tresseler, railway express worker; and several comrades from the Scandinavian and Hungarian branches of the party. All of us, originating from poor or poverty-stricken conditions, hated capitalism and felt even in those confused times that only a militant and armed working class could destroy it.

Despite criticism, then desertion, by state as well as national party leaders, we took militant steps to oppose the registration law. We had hoped that by propaganda and example we could nullify it by mass refusal to register. All of us served county jail terms, then were automatically inducted into service. The ideology of passive resistance as a weapon against capitalism was at that time in full swing and we were its victims. We would go to prison, come out as healthy as possible, and offer a more experienced service to a militant revolutionary organization. We even hoped that the rank and file of the socialist party would oust its Bergrs, Hilquits and other betrayers, and lead the returned troops to revolt. If this now sounds somewhat naive, these thoughts nevertheless saved us from prison despair and guided us in our conduct.

Our first task in prison was to break down the hostility of the general prisoners, numbering over a thousand; later to grow to more than six thousand. Soldiers from the regular and drafted army, court-martialled for various offences, they were still deeply patriotic.

It is too frequently forgotten that prisoners, though rendered grim and brutal by prison life, are at bottom thoroughly human. Challenging their hostility was out of the question; also we had been warned by the prison Commandant against spreading propaganda. The sentries watched us closely. But we could cau-

tiously satisfy the curiosity of a prisoner or two we worked with. Why were we "goddamned slackers"? Why didn't we want to fight for good old Uncle Sam? Guarded as were our replies, we managed to tell them of Karl Marx, of the exploitation of the worker by capitalism, of the Russian Revolution and why we wanted a revolution in America. "When the red flag is hoisted over the prison," we told them, "then you will know that we can all go free." And we meant this, for some of us did not expect to see freedom until a revolution had occurred. The sentries were unaware of what we were doing to the prisoners' minds; the officers in charge noticed no change in the men's attitude against the system that had imprisoned them. Even we were not aware until much later, especially during the prison mutiny, what effects bits of conversation, good fellowship, sharing tobacco, well directed words and explanations could have on formerly patriotic men.

* * *

Having been informed by Washington that a group of conscientious objectors sent from one army camp would refuse to perform prison work, the Commandant, fearing lest we do likewise on their arrival, had a number of us transferred to the seventh wing where the cells were kept open. In this honor wing the men were permitted to elect one of their own number as sentry. Surprised at this consideration accorded only to men about to be released, Charles, working in the main office, learned that the Commandant hoped we would continue working for the sake of retaining the privilege.

Charles, calmer than we youngsters, quieted our anger. What could we achieve by quitting work and going to solitary confinement? Would this help us leave prison healthy enough to do further revolutionary work? In the seventh wing we could form discussion groups, organize classes, and with circumspection spread propaganda on a larger scale. Besides, our objection to war was different from that of those who would refuse to work. Some of us were angry with Charles. We thought it cowardly to be bribed by a privilege. "It's a privilege we can use to do further damage," Charles retorted. "Why didn't we go into the army then to do damage?" we demanded. Charles replied, "Maybe we made a mistake." We were abashed.

Classes organized by Charles in history, science and economics drew a number of general prisoners closer to us. The prisoner-organizer proved friendly and allowed us considerable leeway. Ways were found for sending letters to the outside world, uncensored by the chaplain. Revolutionary publications, *The Communist Manifesto*, text books on Marxism, periodicals reached us secretly by devious means. "Undergrounding" it was called; "sub-rosa" in other prisons. Several were sentenced to solitary confinement for breach of rules, but others carried on the work.

When the group of "absolutists" as they were known, arrived, they threw the prison into turmoil by choosing solitary confinement rather than work. General prisoners thought them foolhardy. Under ordinary circumstances such conduct would have meant a complete break-down of health or violent death. But

WAR

ERICH WEINERT

Translated by S. Gordon, Chicago John Reed Club

*The sky hails bursting flame.
Bombs tear pavements up.
In fire-tortured catacombs
Heaps of twisted charcoal corpses:
War is here!*

*CHAPAI a forest of flame;
Ten thousand coolies—life cracked out:
War is here!*

*War is here! The market registers:
The world is recovering! Stocks climb!
Go higher, higher towards the crash!
Three years of war—we are insane!
War is here!*

*Hurl bombs at VLADIVOSTOK!
Provoke the Bolsheviks to fury!
AMERICA, transport soldiers!
Drown all East Asia in blood!
War is good!*

*Bring your fire in from the East!
Europe clutches from the West!
There MUST be war!*

*There MUST be war! The Exchange shrieks:
Bombs! Gas! We export!
Bolshevism must die,
Though the whole world tears itself to pieces,
There MUST be war!*

*Do you see the giant, holding in his hands
The colossal hammer?
Breaking forth out of blood and destruction
The PROLETARIAT OF THE WORLD!
His war is here!*

*Millions will carry hammers.
Strike death from beneath:
Fight YOUR war!*

*The market registers no more;
Burn the stocks!
Blow up the quarters of the war-mongers!
Now the RED ARMY leads the fight!
The FINAL war!*

by then prison discipline was already undermined. Sentries were prevented from using clubs on them by the force of outside publicity, resulting from "underground" letters by Charles and others. Protests to Washington compelled prison authorities to stop handcuffing men in solitary confinement to the cell bars. This victory, coming after months of heroic struggle by these absolutists, thrilled the entire prison and raised the prestige of the political prisoners. For the first time in American prison history the terror of solitary confinement was smashed.

Among the absolutists was Roderick Seidenburg, talented writer and architect and Evan Thomas, more militant in spirit than his well known brother, but politically as unclear. Active for a short period after his release in strikes, he has left the revolutionary struggle completely.

To understand the reactions of these men, it is necessary to explain their reasons for opposing conscription as well as prison work. According to them no society had the right to impose a task upon them, military or otherwise. In a revolution they would still be conscientious objectors. They could not accept prison work because by so doing they would acknowledge the moral right of society to imprison them for maintaining that the right of the individual is superior to that of society. I am using their words. They were at bottom Anarchists, though almost all of them objected violently to the term at that time. They believed in passive resistance as individuals, for they looked askance at subjecting themselves to organizational discipline. They could not see that when driven by fear of hunger to be exploited by capitalism they made ludicrous the theory that the individual is an entity apart from the masses, struggling against a common oppressor.

* * *

The strike, or mutiny as the authorities termed it, had its roots in a welter of events. Bad food, deprivation of tobacco, a plague of influenza, long sentences that, if served, practically meant a man's life, the unbounded arrogance, as well as brutality at times, on the part of prison authorities. Had the revolutionists not been present, a riot might have occurred, and like all prison riots been drowned in blood. The authorities realized this. After our victory, when practically all political prisoners had been removed to other prisons, a second strike was deliberately provoked with the aid of some brutal prisoners and was crushed with gun fire.

The mass of prisoners on refusing to work asked us to lead them. This was a direct result of our propaganda. To their demands for better food and tobacco, however, we added that of general amnesty. The revolutionists organized a general committee. The Commandant refused to treat with this representative committee led by the political prisoners. He had several companies of armed soldiers outside the walls ready to attack the prisoners within the wings. Secret communications, rushed to the outside, roused the country. The Commandant gave in. He met the committee, released all prisoners from solitary confinement, gave us, contrary to prison rules, not only a full diet in place of bread and water, but better food; ordered back the regular allowance

of tobacco; and wired Washington that if we could not be given amnesty, to revise our sentences sharply downward. Only upon his sending that wire did the committee agree to advise the prisoners to end the strike.

In those days the Commandant's proud shoulders sagged and his face wrinkled with humiliation. He had boasted of the iron discipline with which he governed the prison. But the prisoners, general and political, held their heads high and filled the entire prison with song:

"Arise ye prisoners of starvation,
"Arise ye wretched of the earth..."

Amnesty we did not receive, but revised sentences virtually amounted to that.

It was during those days that Charles, watching the once patriotic prisoners singing the Internationale, said almost wistfully: "Think what we might have done in the army!"

Our achievement in prison was on the whole unrelated to the revolutionary struggle against imperialism. Logically so. Like those who had gone to Mexico, we had made the mistake of cutting ourselves off from the masses. Had there been a militant revolutionary leadership among the discontented American troops in Siberia and in Archangel, the results, if not decisive, might at least have marked a milestone in American revolutionary history.

In the next war the writer, for one, will not err by putting a thick prison wall between himself and the masses. Conscripted, he will be in the army. In the army, he will do his part, however small, to turn the guns of his fellow-soldiers away from one another and against their officers, to overthrow this capitalist government, and to establish a Communist Republic in these United States.



While you and your buddies went to get your heads blown off—



And the food! and cooties!—Yea, and where were the generals and colonels?



After the war— You who came back heroes—looking for a job—Yea, and what did ya get."



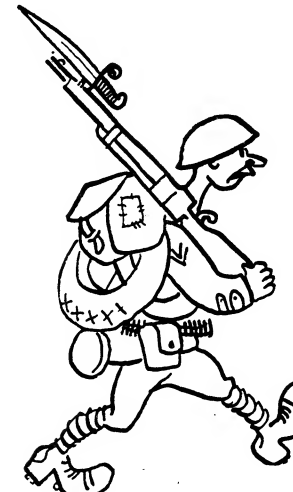
Many of you buddies, have to pick your food, and it ain't because you're particular.



"Home Sweet Home" is sweet music to the fat babies who have plenty. What does it mean to a lot of you buddies?

You Fight — We Eat

WILLIAM GROPPER



You Buddies went to the front. You were loaded up with tin cans on your heads. Artillery up to your necks, blankets on your backs to fight for democracy.



Senators, preachers, politicians and the fat boys from both houses were shouting "Hurrah" and belching hot-air.



And the millionaires, captains of industry back home, who were cleaning-up, making munitions, packing stinking food? Yes, for the "boys over there."

HARRY RAYMOND

THE SIEGE OF THE CAPITAL

The tense atmosphere of martial law hovers over the capital of the United States. Police cars cruise up and down Pennsylvania Avenue. Aeroplanes buzz overhead. Heavy guards mill about government buildings. Companies of police with riot equipment march into the cellars of the Capitol. Leaves are cancelled for troops. The whole military apparatus of the District of Columbia is held in readiness.

For what?

Twenty thousand tattered, hungry, mud-besmeared, jobless veterans of the late Woodrow Wilson's crusade to make the world safe for "democracy" are in and about the city. They have come from every state in the United States to demand their back wages. The boys were hungry and they wanted their back wages to buy some food for themselves and families.

The government, which had only recently paid a bonus of over two billion to the bankers, stated that a bonus of an equal sum paid to the war veterans would be disastrous. It would, indeed, be a raid on the treasury, said the sleek, well-paid Senators.

Therefore the military machinery was oiled and the tear gas unpacked. The capitalist state, that organized system of force and violence, prepared to enforce starvation on the worker veterans with bullets and gas.

The cry, "The Reds started it all!" was blazoned in the headlines of all the newspapers. The Communist paper, the *Daily Worker*, admitted it. The Reds did start it away back in December when they organized the great hunger march to the Capitol to demand unemployment insurance and relief for the hungry working people.

Communists showed the way. The Workers Ex-Servicemen's League issued a call for the war veterans to march to Washington and place their demands for full payment of the soldiers' bonus and unemployment insurance before Congress and at the same time demand that a stop be put to the war preparations.

The call was answered. From every state the tattered companies, battalions and regiments came. They came on freights; they hitch-hiked; they came on motor trucks; they marched. They were attacked by police and confronted by the National Guard. They were shot at in New Orleans, jailed in Pennsylvania, terrorized and threatened everywhere. But they marched on. On to the Capitol to demand their back wages.



And when you, heroes, who won the war, and made this World safe for Democracy go down to Washington to ask for your Bonus—What do you get?



Those Senators, preachers, politicians and the fat boys from both houses who were shouting "Hurrah" and belching hot-air—they give you the same crap.



And the Millionaires, Captains of Industry, why should they worry for you, they're not starving!

THE WAR IS NOT OVER, BOYS,

men's League would be allowed in the camps around Washington. Members of the League were singled out and driven from the camp. But this did not last long. Soon came the Chicago Delegation of the Workers Ex-Servicemen's League headed by a rank and file committee. They marched right into the mud flats at Anacostia and established their headquarters. They smashed down the jimcrow barriers and elected Joe Gardner, Communist Candidate for Assembly in Chicago, their commander. Two thirds of this group was white.

There came more companies from Cleveland, Detroit, New York, Terre Haute, Texas, all staunch fighters for the program of the Workers Ex-Servicemen's League. The rank and file of the camp forced the hand-picked leadership to admit these groups. Terror, intimidation, spy systems and police could not dissolve the influence of these groups. The best sections of the worker veterans flocked around them and headed their program. In a great parade down Pennsylvania Avenue the Chicago contingent led the largest section of the parade and were the most cheered by the spectators.

The pressure of the veterans in Washington forced the House to pass the bonus bill. The bill went to the Senate. The vets knew that the Senate would attempt to kill it. They demanded action from the hand-picked leadership. The rank and file agitated for a demonstration before the Senate building. But Waters told the men to stay in camp.

"It will hurt our cause", he said, "if we come out and demonstrate. Don't listen to Reds and hotheads."

But the bonus army did listen to the Reds. At 5:25 in the afternoon of Friday, June 17, when the Senate was debating the bill, the rank and file arose and started a great march on the Capitol. The leaders could no longer halt them. The police were called. The 11th Street bridge which spans the Potomac was raised and the army was split in two. A scene of revolutionary Petrograd was reenacted in the capital of the United States.

Yet 8,000 of the marchers reached the Capitol. Three thousand sat on the Senate steps; five thousand stood in front of the Capitol.

It was a grim, ragged army. Patriotic speeches of the "High Command" and Senator Thomas left the army cool. The Texas contingent was cheered when it came in singing "Hold the Fort." Waters told them to be quiet. They were accustomed to discipline.

When Waters announced that the bill was killed, a tremendous boo arose from the vast army. Waters spoke again. There was muttering and the beginnings of storm. But even frightened officials are cunning; they had foreseen this. The U. S. Army band which was conveniently present for the occasion struck up "America" to drown out incipient demonstration. Waters urged the men to sing. "Sweet land of liberty of Thee I sing!" There was feeble response, though government employes and Waters' lieutenants swelled their throats. But the body of the men marched off to break the news of the sell-out to their comrades in the camps and billets.

Now the Workers Ex-Servicemen's League is more than ever coming to the fore. The leadership of the "Bonus Expeditionary Forces" is challenged in all the camps. Thousands of veterans under the leadership of rank and file committees have marched from the muddy flats across the Potomac and seized over a dozen government buildings. Pace, a leader of the Workers Ex-Servicemen's League, was elected by the rank and file as corps commander over the seized building area.

Waters is calling for a third fascist party. The Communists in the bonus army are consolidating a strong united front from below to carry on a real fight against hunger and war.

I was talking to a vet from Johnstown, Pennsylvania, a steel worker. He said: "I'm not a red, but I'll damned soon be one." This, I found, was the sentiment of great sections of the veterans in Washington.

Police cars are still cruising on Pennsylvania Avenue, aeroplanes still buzzing overhead. Armed groups mill about government buildings and leaves of the troops are still cancelled. Twenty thousand tattered, hungry, mud-besmeared veterans are camped on the Potomac waiting—but also working out plans for the next steps in the fight for the bonus.

A Worker Writes

Workers and Soldiers

Johnson goes uptown to catch a trolley, and I walk through the park to catch a bus. A lot of workers are sitting on the benches, or looking in waste-cans for newspapers; they are ragged, and burned by the weather, and their faces are without smiles. I know it is only a question of time. I get on a bus. There are only two passengers. One of them works at an oxygen plant, and the other at the railroad yards. Every morning the workers talk about the same things: lay-offs, hunger, bonus-marchers, and revolution. The railroad worker is talking:

"They're still coming in," he says. "I seen five hundred from Richmond, and every day I give some boes something to eat. I never throw nothing away. They always grab it. They grab it like rats. I'll be goddamned if they won't eat garbage. 'Thank you, chief.' 'Thank you, boss.' 'Thank you, mister.' That's how they talk to you. I never seen nothing like it. By god, if they was ever to get together, there ain't nothing in this world to stop them from taking what they want. Christ A'mighty, they've got the army and navy twenty to one. I hope I live to see it," he says. "I hope by god I live to see it."

The oxygen worker is talking. He talks to the driver, the railroad worker; every now and then he turns to me:

"All over America it's like that," he says. "The country is in a bad shape when people have got to starve. The Government won't do nothing. Watch what I say. Democrats or Republicans, it's all the same in the end. The Government won't help the working class. They don't give a damn," he says. "Get fat off our blood, too goddamn fat." The bus stops, and swings lightly off the at oxygen plant. After the door swings shut the driver starts to talk.

"I don't like it," he says. "I'm from Jacksonville. All over it's the same. I feed four or five a week. I don't give them any money, but this week I bet I've spent eight dollars feeding them poor sons-of-bitches. I went to the bonus camp, and I took some of my kid's shoes and clothes over. Some of the kids there are barefoot, and they sure oughta have shoes. I took 'em some. I sent one guy to the Salvation Army before the bonus marchers come here. They wouldn't even let him sleep on the floor. I wrote a letter to a Washington paper about it, and six of those charity soldiers all dressed up in gold lace, came to my house and wanted me to write another letter saying I made a mistake. They said I did the Salvation Army a lot of harm. I'll be goddamned if any charity organization ever gets any more of my money. I'm tired of making an ass of myself for some grafter to get rich off of. I see them charity grafters riding around in big cars. They ain't fooling me anymore, even if I am from the South."

The railroad worker turns to me:

"It's tough alright. You know, it's tough. We got three hundred of our men walking the streets, and maybe a hundred of them have been working for the railroad ten years or more. They got money to build a goddamn bronze elevator for some flunky in the Government to ride in, but they don't have no money for starving people. A hundred thousand dollars for a couple of bronze doors, but not one goddamn cent to help the working people. How long will it last?" he says. "How long do we have to stand it?"

The bus swings around a corner and stops. The railroad worker gets off. There is a lot of smoke in the air, and trains moving in the yards. The coal-feeder stands very high and dark against the grey clouds, and workers are breaking cars over the Hump. I see men crossing the acres of tracks, or going into the roundhouse; some of them are standing in front of a restaurant talking, and turning the pages of papers. There are no passengers, and the driver shifts gears, and we are going down a narrow street shaded with maples; the homes of workers are silent with milk bottles on the porches and unsmiling men digging in the gardens.

"I don't like it," says the driver. "Last week I saw some bonus marchers coming in the rain, and they were ragged, and cold, and maybe you don't believe it, but they were crying, and it was a hell of a sight to see in the richest country in the world. I don't like it. The unions ain't any good either. Shot to hell and back again. What does my union do for the working man? What has the South ever done for the working man? I ain't no Bolshevik,



Herb Kruckman

Herb Kruckman

"ALL YOU VETS IS BUMS OR REDS," SAYS I, "AND LETS HIM HAVE IT IN THE MOUTH FOR THE HONOR OF THE 'FORCE'"

but all those charity guys getting rich off the poor class of people gets my goat. I wouldn't give the Salvation Army a coffin to bury themselves in. I don't want nobody calling me a Bolshevik, but things have got to change or we are going to have trouble. I don't like it, and I don't care who the hell knows I don't like it. I'm a worker," he says, "and I feel sorry for those other workers out in the mud and the rain. We're all workingmen, and we got to stick together."

"How many workingmen know we've got to stick together?" I say. "How many in the South know we can't get anywhere as long as the white worker fights the black?"

"I don't know," he says. "I'm from Jacksonville. It's hard for me to get used to niggers. I guess it's the way I was brought up," he says. "I don't know why I should hate a nigger. Lots of them are heap better than some white people I know. I guess it's all in the way you were brought up."

"That's the reason working conditions in the South are so rotten," I say. "The bosses keep the white worker fed up on lies about the Negro worker so the two races won't be friends and organize. They tell the white worker his wages are much better than the 'nigger-wages', and they tell the Negroes their wages are as good or better than the poor-whites. Both races know they are being exploited by their bosses, but the propaganda of the churches and the schools and the patriotic societies keep the races apart so the bosses can have cheap labor. Only when both races organize together can the working class win freedom."

As I start to leave the driver looks at men kind of funny. "I know you're right," he says. "I know you're right, but that kind of talk won't go in the South unless you've got the bonus army in back of you and plenty of ammunition to back it up. You're right," he says, "and I wish the other workers got a kick in the pants and opened their eyes. I wish to Christ I could open their eyes for them."

I get off the bus, and he says "so-long", and I say "so-long" also, and my night-watch is over and the morning begun for the world of day-workers.

JOHN C. ROGERS

Worker-Writers!

What did you do during the last war? What will you do in the war that is being prepared against the Soviet Union? You will be ordered to fight in it. Write about it in the *New Masses*.



“ALL YOU VETS IS BUMS OR REDS,” SAYS I. “AND LETS HIM HAVE IT IN THE MOUTH FOR THE HONOR OF THE ‘FORCE’”

Herb Kruckman



“ALL YOU VETS IS BUMS OR REDS,” SAYS I, “AND LETS HIM HAVE IT IN THE MOUTH FOR THE HONOR OF THE ‘FORCE’”

Herb Kruckman

John Reed Club Resolution Against War

The John Reed Clubs of the United States, in their first public act as a national organization, call upon all American artists and writers, upon all other intellectual and professional workers, to join the John Reed Club campaign of active struggle against imminent imperialist war. We cannot blind ourselves to the immediate danger of another world-wide slaughter. We cannot ignore the fact that the Japanese imperialist attack now being prepared against the Soviet Union will involve the entire world. It would be criminal for us who are active in the arts and the professions not to realize that the coming imperialist war will destroy all cultural achievements. It would be cowardice for us to allow the industrial workers and poor farmers to carry on, alone, the fight against the war. We must join the workers, or lose even the nominal right to be called intellectuals.

By this we do not mean "pacifism", or "conscientious objection", or "non-combatant service" in time of war. Active and determin-

ed opposition to the war planned by imperialist governments, including the United States, is the only course we can adopt. We must energetically combat war propaganda and rally to the support of those workers who refuse to transport munitions.

The Soviet Union has repeatedly demonstrated that it stands for peace. Maxim Litvinoff, its delegate, has time and again presented to the League of Nations the Soviet proposal for full and complete disarmament. The League's refusal to consider even partial disarmament exposes the hypocrisy of the imperialist powers.

The achievements of the Five Year Plan are not only technical, but cultural. In the rising Soviet state lies the hope of the intellectuals of the world.

Writers! Artists! Professionals! Organize with us against imperialist destruction, stand with us in defense of the first workers' republic, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which is the first republic, too, of artists and writers working for a higher culture.

Oakley Johnson

The John Reed Club Convention

"One year ago was held the Kharkov congress, guided by some of the most politically mature writers in the world's working class movement. This congress gave out, as its two main directives, the following:

(1) *It is our task to create a proletarian literature out of the workshops, out of the factories and mines.*

(2) *It is the task of every workers' cultural group to bring in, also, those who are of the middle class, which is in a state of collapse. This class will vacillate. Marx said that vacillating is their historic role. They will bring in dangerous elements. But everything in the Revolution is dangerous."*

It is Michael Gold, of the John Reed Club of New York speaking. The place is Lincoln Center Auditorium, Chicago, and the occasion the National Organizing Conference of May 29-30. Thirty-eight delegates, representing eleven John Reed Clubs, with a total membership of about 800 writers and artists, are assembled. They are discussing the correct revolutionary attitude to take toward 'fellow travelers'—bourgeois artists and writers who are sympathetic but are not fully won over.

"We can't by taking thought produce great writers or artists," Michael Gold continued. "We can only take concerted action. We can have very clear political lines. At Kharkov the platform was simple, and political. Any writer who subscribed to the political platform was admitted. It should be clear that no one is asked to change his mental habits. Nothing will be dictated to him. You who are here believe in proletarian or colloquial or journalistic writing, and some middle class liberal believes in Proustian writing—but I say bring him into the movement if he is a writer of influence and talent. We cannot afford to have aesthetic quarrels."

Harry Carlisle of the John Reed Club of Hollywood was not satisfied with the conciliatory invitational attitude of Mike Gold toward middle class intellectuals.

"We must not cringe in our approach to these intellectuals," he declared. "We must teach them that the first thing is to approach an organization on an organizational basis. We must not be short-sighted. Upton Sinclair, who is on the editorial board of *Literature of the World Revolution*, is at the same time a perennial candidate on the ticket of the California Socialist Party. He appears on programs in debates with Aimee Semple McPherson. The German Communists, we know, have taken a very definite attitude against Upton Sinclair. Is our need of Sinclair so great that we can afford to fall down on principles?"

The sooner we face this thing the better. Middle class intellectuals should have proven to them that they are going through an historical process, and their world is being disintegrated. They are being thrust down into the ranks of the workers. College professors in California, for example, can be told that 1,000 univer-

sity students were unable to register last semester because of the economic crisis.

"I suggest," Carlisle concluded, "that we don't lose sight of the fact that not all intellectuals are middle class. There is a certain proportion of artists and writers of distinctly working class origin, who can be approached on the basis of working class principles. We must not lose sight of that. There we have a connecting link on the basis of revolutionary development."

These speeches epitomized, in a way, not conflicting viewpoints but conflicting emphases. Not what is important, but which is more important, was the issue.

"We should meet the intellectual on his own ground by pointing out to him that under capitalist society he lacks opportunity for freedom of expression," Conrad Komorowski of Philadelphia, taking his own line of approach to the problem of the middle class writer, stated. "It is here that the John Reed Club enters. We have to demonstrate that it has given artists and writers their means of highest expression. There is no great art which is not animated by a purpose. Capitalist art is decadent because it has no dynamic purpose. We must point out to the intellectual that only the proletariat has the possibility of building a great and forward-looking culture."

Sharply bringing the delegates themselves, through a precise definition, into the envisaged problem, Joseph Freeman declared, "All members of the John Reed Clubs who are not members of the Communist Party are, strictly speaking, fellow travelers. We don't use the word, 'fellow-traveler', as an insult. In fact the movement needs fellow-travelers. We know the weaknesses of fellow-travelers as a class, but it is also true that we must not underestimate the importance of sympathetic individuals who have the same background as our own members and have potentially the same future."

Such was the tone of the Monday session of the Conference, in discussing the reports of the commissions. Four main commissions had worked most of the preceding night—the Commissions on the Manifesto, the Organizational Plan, the Program of Activities, and on an Anti-Imperialist War Declaration and various other resolutions. A distinctly high and enthusiastic note was struck for the entire Monday session by the greetings from the International Union of Revolutionary Writers and Artists, read before the opening of the discussion.

"International Union Revolutionary writers greets National Conference John Reed Clubs and great development American proletarian literature. International situation demands we sharpen struggle against imperialist war menace, against all pacifist and 'returning prosperity' illusions, and against increasing danger of intervention in Soviet Union. We urge you to support heroic struggle of Japanese revolutionary writers against Japanese imperialism. In all your work, prime duty is to show that only way out of present crisis lies with proletarian revolution. We

ON DENNEN

WE NEED SOME CLARIFICATION

(In Reply to Edwin Seaver)

Revolution releases the hitherto chained forces and drives them from the bottom to the surface of life . . . But we Communists should not stand with our hands folded and let chaos develop as it pleases. We should plan the leadership of this process and formulate its results.

—LENIN

Revolution or a revolutionary situation brings about a corresponding change in the cultural superstructure, particularly in the United States, has been proven by events in Russia, Germany, the United States and other countries. The problem, however, of guiding revolutionary development out of chaos and formulating its results is much more complex. Here a proper perspective is required. We must examine this process, retrace its steps and direct it into organized revolutionary channels.

The present revolutionary development among some American writers is the culmination of a period in the history of American literature which Joseph Freeman, in an excellent article published in *New Masses*, 7, termed the "Wilsonian Era". During the reign of Wilson, America was established as the world's foremost imperialist power. New York succeeded London as the center of modern capitalism. This profound change, of course, "percolated into American culture, which revolted against the domination of the British Empire and struck out on an independent path."

What was new in the content of the literature of the "Wilsonian Era" was, on one hand, "the conscious and semi-conscious national regional pride in the might and machinery of America"; on the other, "a confused, ironic, bitter revolt of the intelligentsia against some of the implications of the highly standardized, trust-world." In short, "a good deal of the literature of the Wilsonian Era expressed 'the outer helplessness of the intelligentsia in the face of modern industrial civilization controlled by the financial and industrial capitalists.'"

The discord between the writer and his social environment, as Plechanov pointed out, occurs repeatedly in those countries whose literature has reached a certain degree of development, "bitter revolt" and "helplessness" is easily to be traced in the literature of Dreiser, Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, Floyd Dell and other writers of that period.

"Discord", however, was for the most part, period did not deal with fundamentals. The world war the American middle class "on top of the world." There was no end to their gluttony. Revolting against the largeness and gluttony of the prospering bourgeoisie, writers were at the same time accepting the bourgeois order of things. Thus, for the germ of "bitter revolt" to become the proper objective conditions were required. The crash that swept the unsuspecting middle class off its feet, and the loss of what they generally referred to as the "Soviet experiment", sped up this process of maturity.

Contributing the change to "last year" and the Kentucky incident, Edwin Seaver, in his article "The American Writers and the Revolution", (*New Masses*, June, 1932) has narrowed this process of development. He omits altogether from his discussion of new trends among American writers, such men as Merrill Hicks and Newton Arvin. Although neither in Kentucky, the change that has occurred in these writers is perhaps of profounder significance. For, everyone realizes the gain for the revolutionary movement which has won the support of such men as Dreiser, Wilson, Coward, Frank and others, Arvin and Hicks alone, having cast off middle class shibboleths, continue to function in their specific fields. In the others is noticeable a tendency to abandon their novel and criticism and to go in for politics and economics.

To guide this process out of chaos and into organized revolutionary channels, is to safeguard it against a dangerous dualism in economics and politics: conservatism in literature. The writer can best serve the revolutionary movement by

continuing to function in his own specific field. Time and again Lenin emphasized this point. "There is no doubt", he wrote of Gorky, "that he has a great creative talent which has already been of much use to the world proletarian movement. But why should Gorky occupy himself with politics?"

Simpletons will construe this to mean that Lenin advised Gorky not to bother with politics at all. That is not so. Without a profound investigation of the process of the development of society and the fundamental forces that determine it, one cannot portray effectively the life of the proletariat, one cannot be a proletarian writer. What Lenin meant, as he explained on other occasions, was that instead of operating by means of logical deductions, Gorky should express his ideas with the aid of images.

No one will deny the importance and value of Dreiser's "Tragic America". Yet there is no doubt that a novel by him, depicting the life of the American working class from a revolutionary viewpoint, would not only be more competently done, but would also be of far greater importance to the revolutionary movement of this country. And, although I am not thoroughly familiar with Edmund Wilson's excursions into the economic field in the *American Jitters*, his attempt at Marxist criticism was not altogether successful. There is a possibility (a danger, if you please) that while continuing the line of *American Jitters* in economics, he may also continue the line of *Axel's Castle* in criticism.

In this connection I would like to point out that Wilson's articles on "The Literary Class War" in the *New Republic*, prove, that excellent critic though he is, he has not as yet grasped the meaning of Marxist criticism. Having discovered in 1932 a book by Trotsky written in 1923, Wilson set out to expound "truths" that have long been axioms even with those whom he calls "little Marxists." The "reduced syntax and language" to which Wilson refers in dismay has been a part of the Russians' immature Futurist past and is no longer in existence. Indeed, any one acquainted with Soviet literature knows that in search of a method that would reflect and reproduce the life of the vast majority of the Russian people, literary theories in the Soviet Union have come and gone.

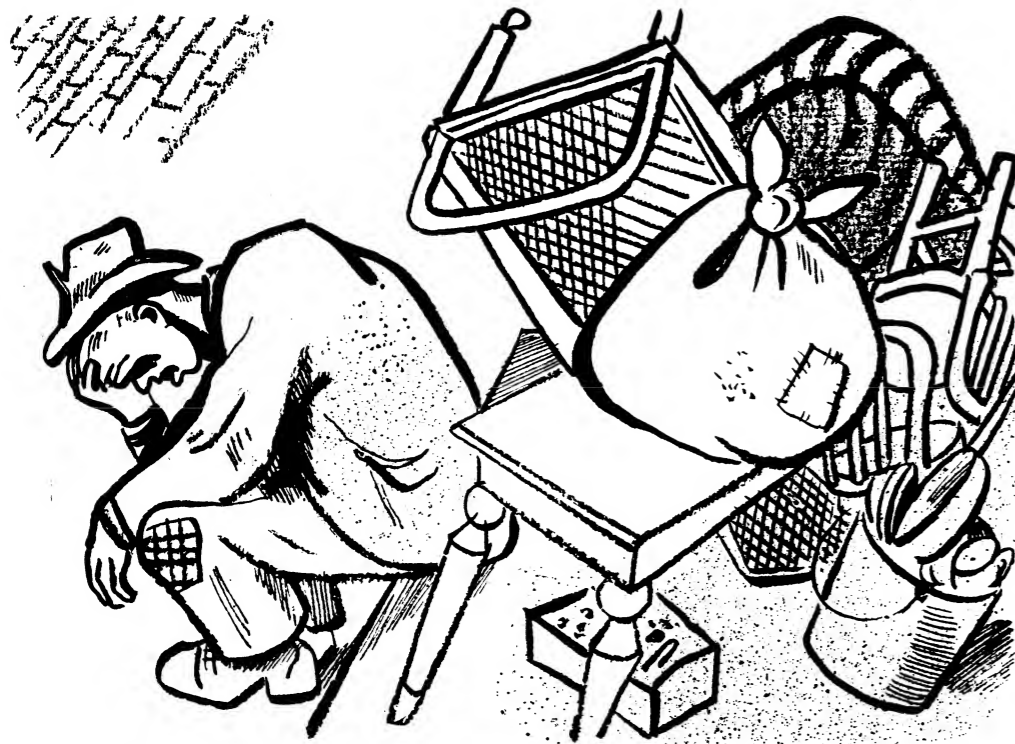
As to the approach of the Marxists to the specific, aesthetic aspect of art, in addition to Plechanov's articles in *Literature of World Revolution*, I should like to cite the following excerpt from a letter to John Dos Passos in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. This letter is, in a sense, typical of the approach of the Soviet critics.

"In your desire to be objective to the maximum" write the critics, Zelinsky and Pavlenko, "you remove yourself ideologically from life. In your desire to grasp the moment, you fall under the influence of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Your newspaper stenograms remind one of Joyce's empirical method. He would like to take an inventory of this world as a sheriff or a receiver does in the course of his duty. No, this is not our approach. This is the bourgeois approach to things. Our problem is not to view this world as an ant crawling from one hill to another. Our task is to study this world and change it. An idea influencing artistic impression does not mean tendentiousness. Goethe understood that well . . ."

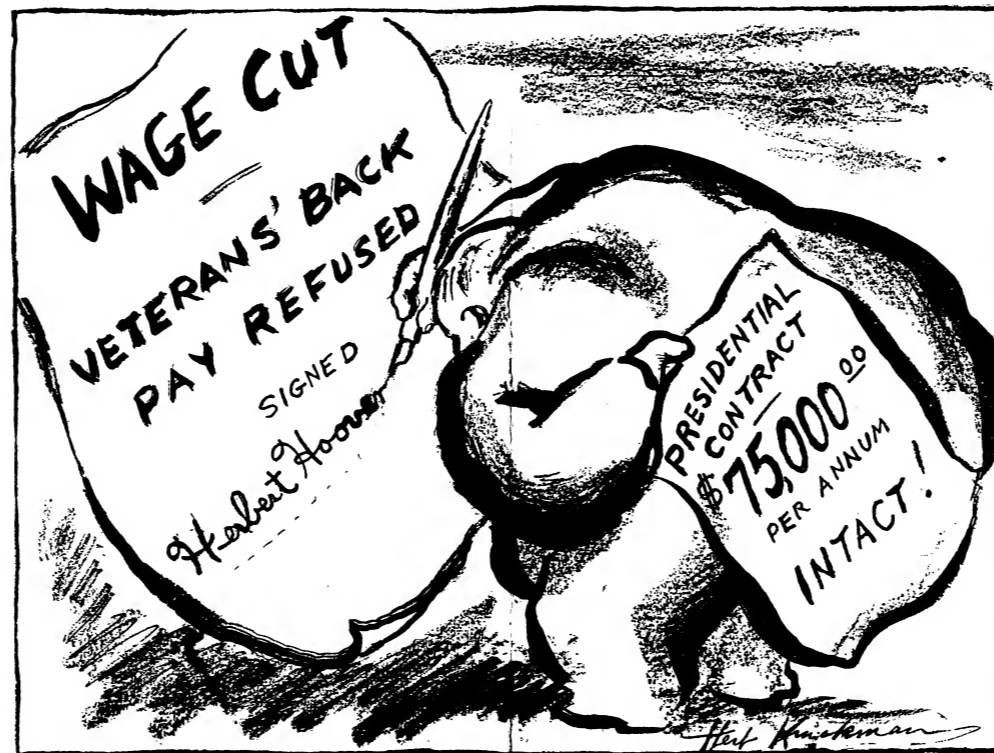
Yes, what we need is first of all a clarification of our views. In speaking, for instance, of the transformation that is going on among American writers today, Seaver fails to point out that in the dialectic process of sharpening class contradictions, the blade cuts from both sides.

"The majority of the intelligentsia", according to Gorky's recent article (An Answer to Some Americans: *New Masses*, June), still continue to be satisfied with their service to capitalism . . . "Some of the middle class intellectuals become radicalized, others turn to fascism. One can draw the fascist line in America between such diverse elements as Archibald MacLeish, who prays for the 'sons of Caesar' to rule over him, and Allen Tate, between Ezra Pound and H. L. Mencken. To combat these successfully, I repeat, we must first of all clarify in our own minds the terms we use and their meaning.

"To the Communist, writes Seaver, 'social-consciousness is no substitute for class consciousness . . .'" But class consciousness is



1. UNEMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL INSURANCE AT THE EXPENSE OF THE STATE AND EMPLOYERS



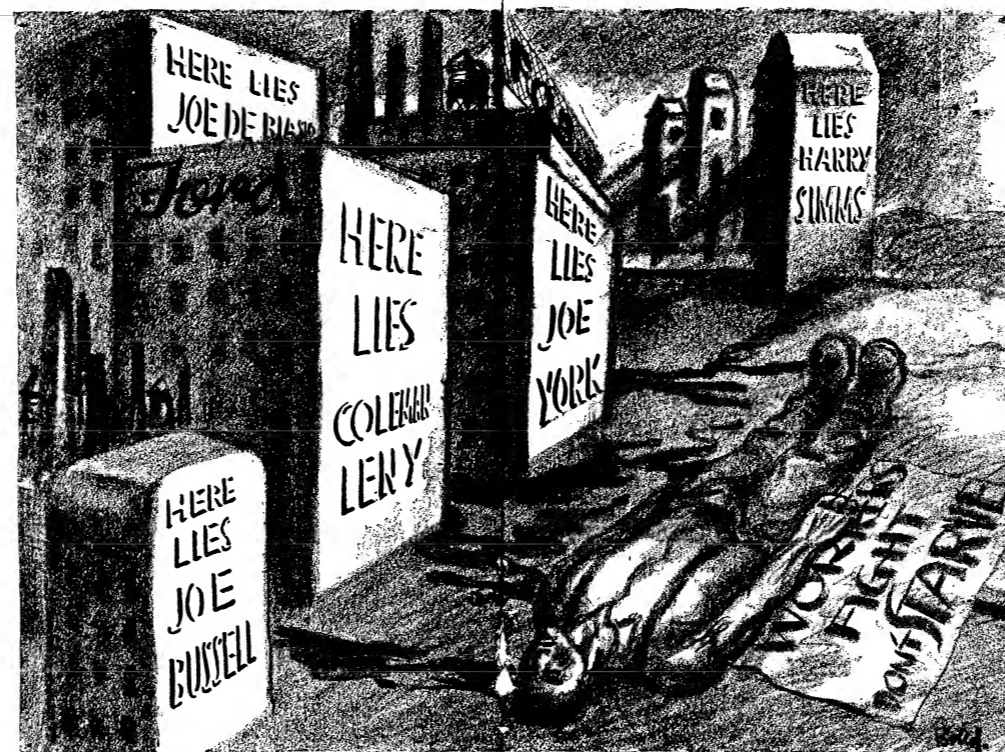
2. AGAINST HOOVER'S WAGE-CUTTING POLICY



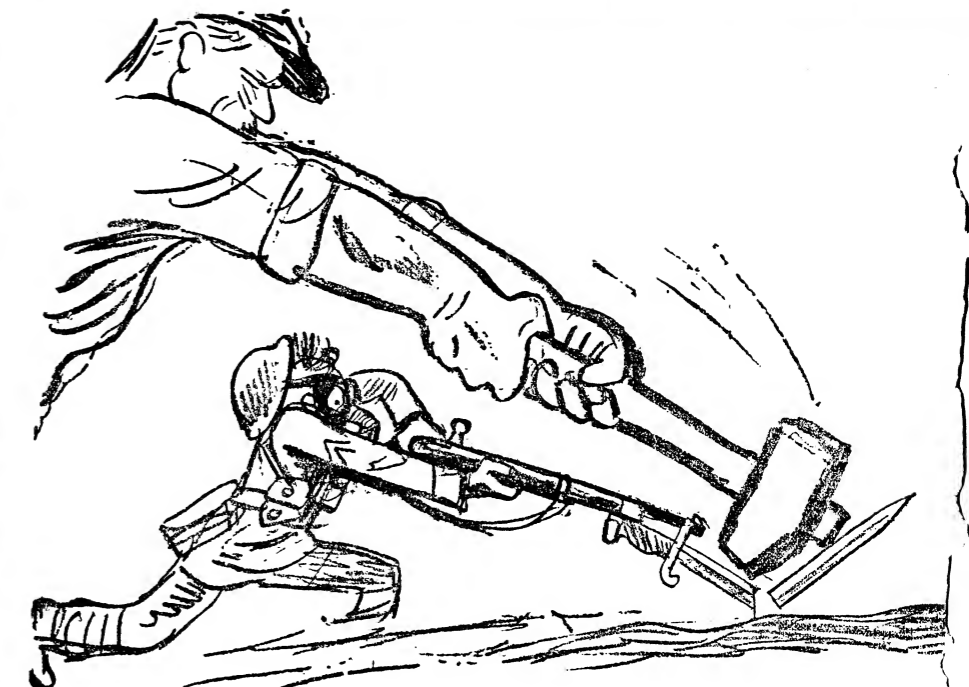
3. EMERGENCY RELIEF FOR THE IMPOVERISHED FARMERS WITHOUT RESTRICTIONS BY THE GOVERNMENT AND BANKS; EXEMPTION IMPOVERISHED FARMERS FROM TAXES, AND NO FORCED COLLECT OF RENTS OR DEBTS



4. EQUAL RIGHTS FOR THE NEGROES AND SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE BLACK BELT



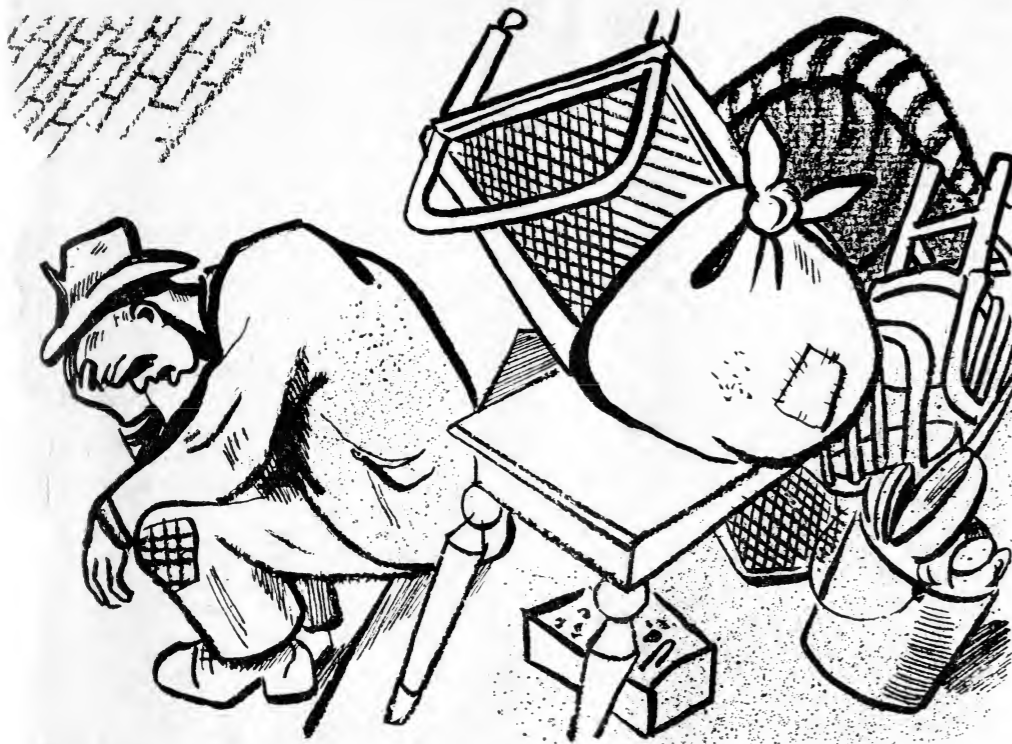
5. AGAINST CAPITALIST TERROR; AGAINST ALL FORMS OF SUPPRESSION OF THE POLITICAL RIGHTS OF THE WORKERS



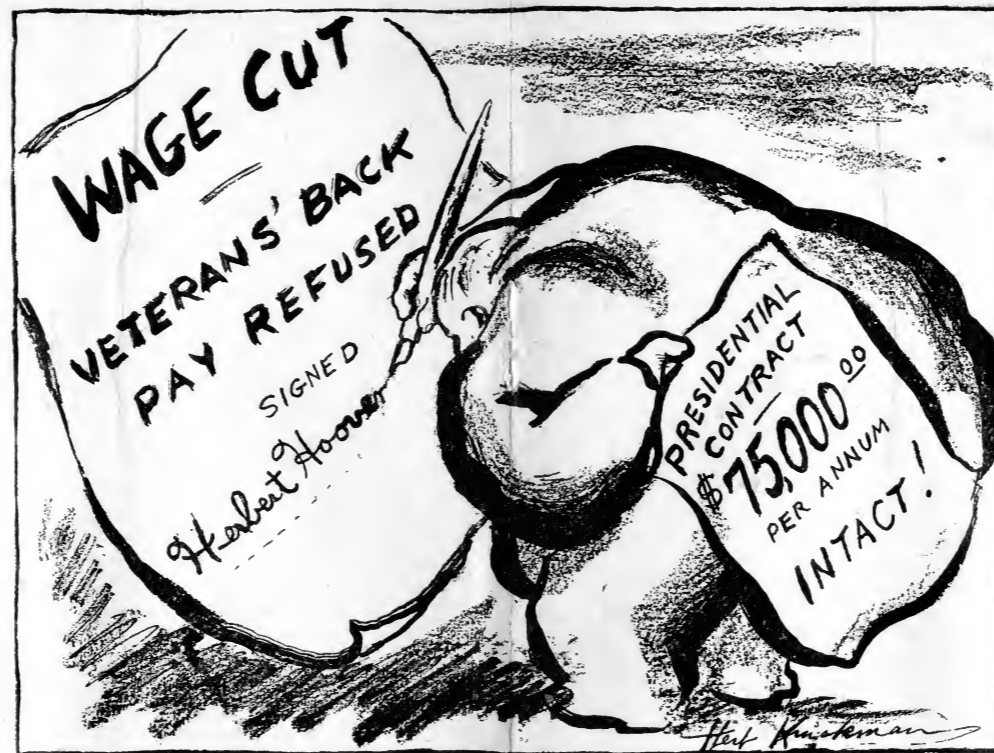
6. AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR; FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE AND OF THE SOVIET UNION

Help Blot These Out!
VOTE COMMUNIST!





1. UNEMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL INSURANCE AT THE EXPENSE OF THE STATE AND EMPLOYERS



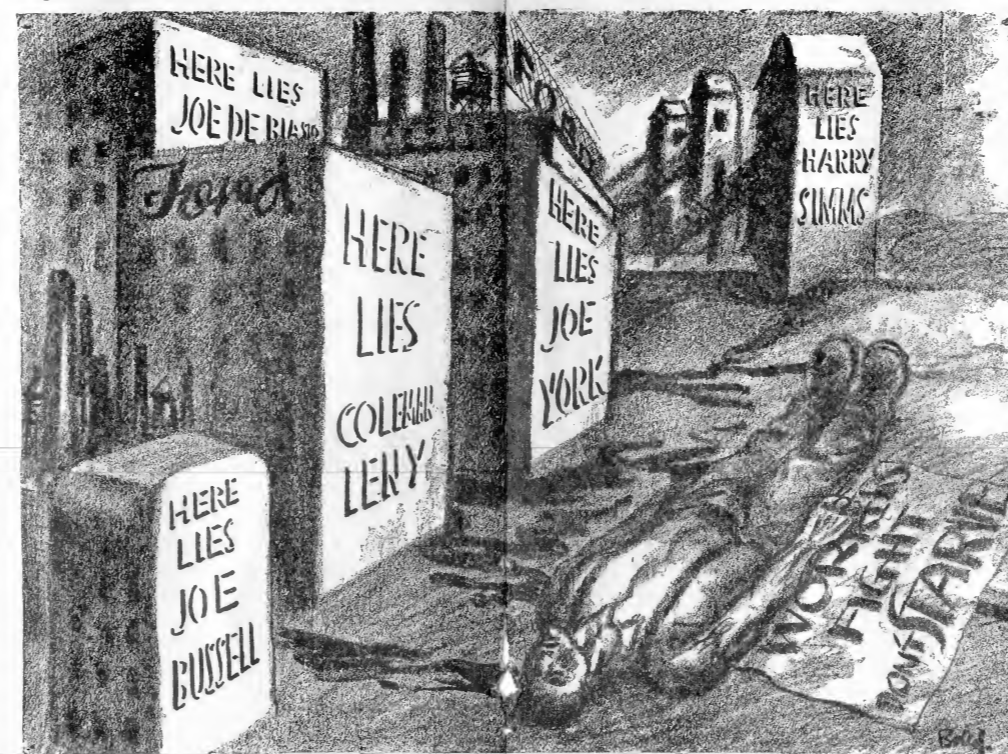
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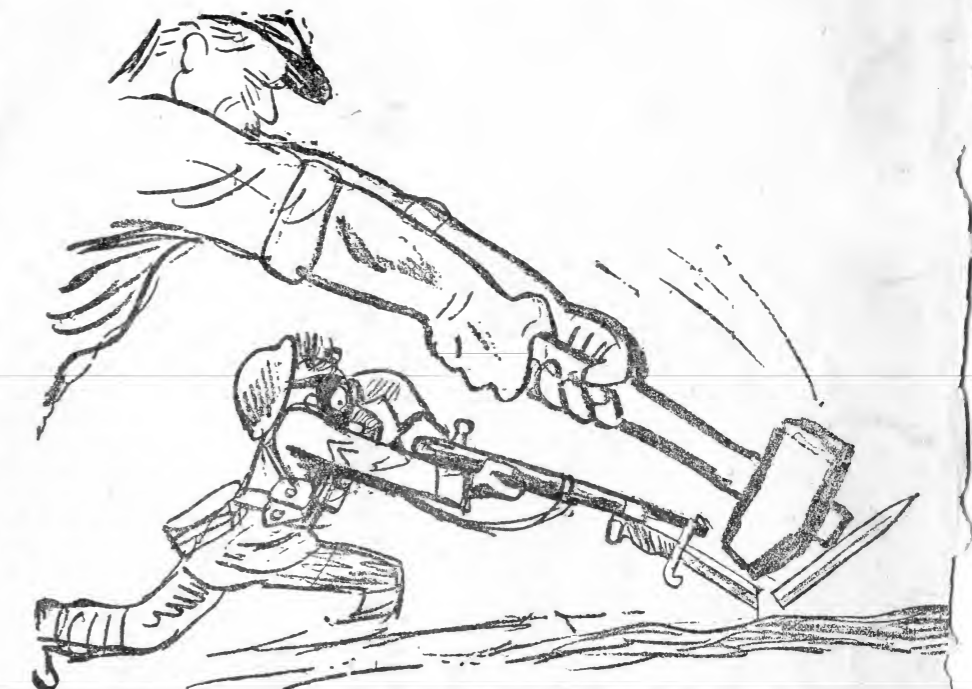
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5. AGAINST CAPITALIST TERROR; AGAINST ALL FORMS OF SUPPRESSION OF THE POLITICAL RIGHTS OF THE WORKERS



6. AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR; FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE AND OF THE SOVIET UNION

Help Blot These Out!
VOTE COMMUNIST!



with help of all our sections pledge to build up work of our international union to fulfill growing tasks facing us."

The radiogram was signed by the Secretariat.

A wire to the Conference from the Progressive Arts Club and *Masses* of Toronto, Canada, sent proletarian greetings to the Conference, and pledged the solidarity of Canadian writers and artists in the struggle of the working class against imperialist war and exploitation. To the organizations from which these greetings came the Conference sent enthusiastic replies, and also messages of comradeship to Maxim Gorky, Romain Rolland, and to the organized Latin-American, German, Japanese and Chinese writers and artists, and to the 2000 beet-workers then in militant and heroic strike-struggle in Colorado.

A resolution of endorsement of *New Masses*, the leading cultural organ of the revolutionary American intellectuals, was passed by the Conference, urging contributions from members of all John Reed Clubs in the United States. At the same time, the resolution expressed satisfaction at the establishment of other periodicals for writers and artists by various local John Reed Clubs, such as the *New Force* published by the JRC of Detroit, the *John Reed Bulletin* published by the JRC of Washington, D. C., and *Left*, recently taken over by the JRC of Chicago. The strengthening and expanding of these publications, and the establishment of others where they are needed and can be satisfactorily handled, was urged as a part of the activity of the various Clubs.

The Conference was officially opened Sunday, May 29, by Jan Wittenber of Chicago. The following were elected as members of the Presidium: Joseph Freeman, New York; Jan Wittenber, Chicago; Maurice Sugar, Detroit; Conrad Komorowski, Philadelphia; Kenneth Rexroth, San Francisco; Charles Natterstad, Seattle; Harry Carlisle, Hollywood; George Gay, Portland; Carl Carlson, Boston; and Jack Walters, Newark (Jack London Club). Honorary members of the Presidium were also elected, consisting of Maxim Gorky, Romain Rolland, John Dos Passas, Fujimori, Lo Hsun, Johannes Becher, Vaillant-Couturier, and Langston Hughes. Maurice Sugar of Detroit was chosen permanent chairman of the Conference, and Oakley Johnson of New York its secretary.

The reports from the various delegates ranged from the enthusiastic and encouraging, to the critical. The John Reed Club of New York was criticised for its failure to provide effective and responsible leadership to the other clubs throughout the country.

Absorbed in its own local activities, the New York group had not seen the importance of carrying forward the work of national cooperative effort, and had neglected to cement its relationship with the other clubs by regular correspondence and organizational assistance. It was not until the John Reed Club of Philadelphia had urgently proposed that the New York Club begin at once the formation of a national federation of the Clubs that action was finally taken, and the Conference called.

On the other hand, during the two and a half years since October, 1929, when the John Reed Club of New York was formed, over a dozen similar clubs have sprung up in other cities. It is no small accomplishment that now, as this report is written, notice has been received of the formation of a half dozen other John Reed Clubs that wish affiliation with the national organization, making almost a score of Clubs of revolutionary artists and writers in the United States.

It is impossible to give in detail the speeches of the delegates. When the Sunday evening session was over, at the end of several tense and absorbing hours, the four Commissions began their work. All the thirty-eight delegates served on one or another of these Commissions. The chairmen were as follows: Commission on Manifesto, Joseph Freeman; on Constitution and Organization Jan Wittenber; on Program of Activities, Conrad Komorowski; on the Declaration against Imperialist War and on other resolutions, Harry Carlisle. After intensive work during much of the night and during most of Monday morning, the second general session, Monday afternoon, May 30, was held. All the delegates were prepared with suggestive plans for organization and for work, but the most complete were those offered by the New York Club as a basis for discussion. These included a draft for a Manifesto, published in the June *New Masses*, drafts of a proposed Constitution and of a proposed schedule of activities, mimeographed copies of which were distributed to all delegates, and a draft of an Anti-War Declaration. The discussion, altering, and expanding of the New York drafts constituted most of the work of the four Commissions.

Briefly, the JRC activities are of two general kinds, described, in the document finally adopted, as follows:

"(a) To make the Club a functioning center of proletarian culture; to clarify and elaborate the point of view of proletarian opposed to bourgeois culture; to extend the influence of the Club and the revolutionary working class movement.

"(b) To create and publish art and literature of a proletarian character; to make familiar in this country the art and literature of the world proletariat, and particularly that of the Soviet Union; to develop the critique of bourgeois and working class culture; to develop organizational techniques for establishing and consolidating contacts of the Clubs with potentially sympathetic elements to assist in developing (through cooperation with the Workers Cultural Federation and other revolutionary organizations) worker-writers and worker-artists; to engage in and give widest publicity to working class struggles; to render technical assistance to the organized revolutionary movement."

The means worked out in detail for the accomplishment of the purposes included publication of pamphlets, sponsoring of national contests for proletarian stories, plays, songs, drawings, distribution of literature, exhibiting revolutionary drawings, paintings, holding public lectures and debates, establishing art schools and schools for worker-correspondents, active participation in strikes and demonstrations, making of posters and distributing of literature to working class organizations, giving chalk talks, dramatic skits and other entertainment at work meetings, and active assistance to campaigns (Scottsboro, M. Berkman) involving special issues.

The organizational work began, naturally, with the recognition that in the United States the John Reed Clubs are an integral part of the Workers Cultural Federation, and owe an important duty to the work of this larger group. Internationally, on the other hand, the John Reed Clubs are a part of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers and Artists, which has sections in all countries of the world. With relation to each other the John Reed Clubs of the United States are a federation, each having autonomy within the general limits of the purpose of the federation, the general supervision and direction to be by a National Executive Board of eleven members, elected annually. One of these eleven is National Executive Secretary, one, International Secretary. The national office, located in New York at 63 West 15 Street, is to be supported by dues of five per member per month from all the Clubs.

The Preamble states, most appropriately, that the Clubs named "in honor of the revolutionist and writer", John Reed, author of *Ten Days that Shook the World*, who, after a brilliant heroic career here and abroad, died in the Soviet Union in 1919. The John Reed Clubs "recognize the irreconcilable struggle between workers and capitalists as two contending classes believe that the interests of all writers and artists should be identified with the interests of the working class." Membership in a JRC is open to any writer or artist who subscribes to the Preamble.

The officers elected were Oakley Johnson, of New York, National Executive Secretary, and Louis Lozowick, of New York, International Secretary. The nine other members of the Board were Joseph Freeman, William Gropper, and Whittaker Chambers of New York; Eugene Gordon, Boston; Conrad Komorowski, Philadelphia; Duva Mendelsohn, Detroit; Jan Wittenber, Chicago; Charles Natterstad, Seattle; and Harry Carlisle, Hollywood. The annual Conference is provided for; the United States is divided into four regional sections for convenience in organization; the executive secretaries of all John Reed Clubs constitute a National Advisory Board, functioning in part as a link between the National Executive Board and the membership, and through the regional groupings, as a means of carrying on activity.

In a call for a Conference sent out by the John Reed Club of New York it was stated that the Clubs should be "organized as a strong weapon for the struggle on the cultural field against capitalism and against the social-fascism which is rapidly coming to be capitalism's cultural front." This recognizes, of course, the conception of art and literature as an ivory tower affair, now outgrown, and that writers and artists must align themselves with the revolutionary proletariat, looking toward a classless society and toward an infinitely higher culture than capitalism offers—or they must align themselves with the capitalist enemy. The John Reed Clubs advance for American intellectuals a program of active support for the revolutionary working class, call upon them to join the only movement that offers a hope for the further development of civilization.

as much an aspect of the capitalist as of the Communist. It is the ends in view that are different. Capitalists are class conscious in order to preserve the system of classes. The class consciousness of the Communist, on the other hand, arises out of his *social consciousness*. Communist class consciousness leads to the abolition of all classes.

Likewise, Seaver believes that to the Communist "sociological criticism is no substitute for class criticism." Lenin, Friche, Plechanov, and other Marxist theoreticians have always referred to the Marxist approach to art as the sociological approach.

"Dialectical materialists believe," wrote Plechanov, "that in literature, art, philosophy, etc. is expressed the social psychology whose character is determined by the state of the mutual relations in which people of a given society find themselves. These relations ultimately depend on the degree of the development of the *social and productive forces* (my emphasis)."

Plechanov is speaking here against the vulgar interpretation of the relation of socio-economics to art. In his book "The Monistic View of History", he criticizes the position of those sociologists

who attribute the state and the development of art to "the state of minds and customs" to "influences". Influences, he claims, should themselves be explained by socio-economic conditions.

Of course, if by sociological critics, Seaver means Lewis Mumford, Van Wyck Brooks, Parrington and others whose sociological criticisms stem from Taine, then sociological criticism is no substitute for Marxist criticism. Taine believed that man and ideas are conditioned by the nature of their environment, the "common psychology" of a given epoch. He made, however, no attempt to explain that the "common psychology" is in turn conditioned by the social and economic development of a given society.

According to the Russian critic, Friche, on the other hand, the sociological analysis of a particular aspect of art or of an artist means the unearthing of the social and class roots or basis of that particular aspect of art or the artist. To speak of a sociological analysis of art is to explain the development of this art through the social and economic development of the given society or societies. In this sense, it seems to me, there is no contradiction between Marxist criticism and sociological criticism.

DAVID RAMSEY

SPLITTING THE ATOM

For some time scientists have been "splitting" atomic nuclei, transmuting one element into another. The results of these experiments have been seized upon by "scientific" apologists of the bourgeois order. They are used by them as a peg upon which to hang apologies for the wholesale pillage and waste of the natural resources of capitalist countries by big business. The apologists point to a future when scientists will conveniently synthesize matter which will replace the materials wasted by capitalist anarchy and supply all the energy needs of the world by blowing atoms to bits.

Both of these contentions are untrue. The conclusions of some thirty years of experimental atomic physics indicate that scientists can find no way out through atomic research for wasted materials and energy resources. Only science, working on a Socialist basis, can solve the problem of the conservation and utilization of natural resources among other fundamental problems of society. Experience in the electrification of the Soviet Union and capitalist countries clearly show this.

1.

The two problems in physics that are perhaps most engrossing the attention of research physicists in 1932 are the determination of the forces that hold the atom together, and the development of means for producing and controlling high voltages up to one hundred million volts. The solution of these two problems would be of the greatest theoretical and practical value. On the one hand it would lead to the complete automatization and centralization of control in the electrification of industry and agriculture. On the other, it would give scientists a much better picture of the structure of the universe, particularly its ultimate constituents.

These two fields of research supplement one another. Modern discoveries in atomic physics have revolutionized our knowledge of the mechanism of the transmission of electric charges. Correspondingly, high voltages have proven to be the best techniques for studying the internal make-up of the atom. By means of giant X-ray tubes and huge generators, voltages of the order of two to ten million volts have been produced in laboratories. The force of such voltages is so great that although five hundred thousand to two million volts have been the highest voltages used so far, physicists have already produced synthetic radium rays and transmuted chemical elements.

It is interesting to note in passing that modern physics, the most abstract of the sciences, gives further proof of the validity of one of the fundamental principles of dialectic materialism—the unity of theory and practice. Dialectic materialism points out that theory and practice correctly understood are not opposed to one another. They are both steps in the joint process of "the reproduction of social life". Their mutual interaction (as pointed out, for example, in the case of atomic physics and the physics of high voltages) shows that practice leads to a wider theory and

that a wider theory leads to a more extended practice.

One of the objectives of the modern atomic physics is to "split" complex atoms and break them down into the "primitive" atoms of hydrogen and helium. An atom, as is well known, is composed of a heavy nucleus which is positively charged with electricity, and electrons—bits of matter that are negatively charged. The number of electrons that an atom possesses varies from one to ninety-two. The hydrogen atom, the lightest of the atoms, has but one electron; the uranium atom, the heaviest of the atoms, has ninety-two electrons. It is fairly easy to rob or strip an atom of an electron by means of a powerful electric current, a source of light (in the case of photo-electrical materials), etc. But to split the nucleus of an atom which consists in the case of the complex heavy elements of hydrogen and helium atoms packed closely together, has been found very difficult and has been accomplished only in a few of the ninety-two elements.

This is in part due to the immense size of the nucleus as compared with an electron. In the hydrogen atom, for example, the mass of the hydrogen nucleus (proton) is eighteen hundred and twenty-nine times as large as the mass of the electron. This means that much greater forces are required to attack the nucleus than are necessary to strip an atom of one or more electrons. Only within the past decade have physicists with the aid of high voltages successfully disrupted the nuclei of some atoms of low atomic weight.

For some time physicists have known that the nucleus of an atom determines the structure of that portion of space that constitutes an atom. But this central stronghold is guarded by a strong internal electric field, which opposes and turns back all projectiles that approach it. Hitherto impregnable to external assault, the nuclei of some of the lighter elements, nitrogen, beryllium, boron, fluorine, lithium, etc. have been broken up by the use of a combination of high speed projectiles and strong electric fields.

It was found that the heavy elements like uranium and radium were in an unstable state of decay. They underwent an explosive internal disintegration giving off swiftly moving helium particles (alpha rays), high speed electrons (beta rays) a very penetrating radiation (gamma rays), heat, etc. Here and there one atom out of many millions suddenly exploded. An alpha particle, or a beta particle and a gamma ray were ejected. A different atom was left behind. Radioactivity thus involves atomic chemical and physical changes. There is an actual chemical transmutation of the elements. Uranium eventually degenerates into radium, radium into polonium, and polonium into lead. The end product of all radioactive atoms is lead, a stable and inactive element, the stuff such as our world is chiefly made of.

Radioactivity indicated that the alchemists' dream, the transmutation of matter, goes on in nature. Radioactive atoms break down into new types by the forceful ejection of material particles.

But no human means have been discovered of hastening, still less of controlling these natural transmutations of one element into another. They depend on chance happenings within the atom, their frequency conforming to the laws of probability.

In 1919 Rutherford discovered that the bombardment of light elements such as nitrogen by fast moving helium particles resulted in atomic transformations. Nitrogen has an atomic weight of fourteen. Its nucleus is composed of three helium nuclei, weighing twelve, and two hydrogen nuclei weighing two. When struck by a high speed helium particle moving with about one-tenth the velocity of light, the nitrogen nucleus was shattered, and of its constituents, hydrogen nuclei were shot out with great velocity (sixty to ninety-five percent of the velocity of light). Here was a possibility of breaking down an atom at will. Further, since the amount of energy liberated in atomic disruptions is many thousand times more than that associated with the most violent chemical reactions known, here was a possibility of tapping an unimaginably rich reservoir of atomic energy.

Further experimentation has shown both of these notions to be invalid. In the first place, scientists are able to transmute elements in one direction only. They can break atoms down, but they cannot build them up. And even when physicists break down some atoms they do it on an infinitesimal scale. Rutherford's bombardment of nitrogen atoms broke nitrogen down into helium and hydrogen. But the hydrogen produced was in such infinitesimal quantity that it would require hundreds of years to produce the small quantity necessary for a quantitative chemical test for hydrogen.

The latest experiments and discoveries have followed along the lines of Rutherford. Complex elements are being broken down into simple elements. In February of this year, Chadwick and Ellis, English physicists working at Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge, announced their discovery of "neutrons". They found that when they bombarded light elements, like beryllium, boron, and fluorine with high speed helium particles, they produced a stream of swift, uncharged particles which they named "neutrons". These "neutrons" appear to be uncharged bits of matter, a very close combination of proton and electron, packed so tightly together as to form an uncharged (as opposed to the common charged) nuclear unit. This discovery should throw some new light on the theory of the proton which at present rests on Dirac's dubious postulate that a proton is an electron in a negative energy state.

In April, two more English physicists, also working at Cavendish Laboratory—Cockcroft and Walton—carried a synthetic transmutation of elements a step further. They found that when they bombarded lithium with high speed hydrogen particles, produced by a method employing some six hundred thousand volts, they occasionally (once in a billion times) broke down a lithium atom of atomic weight seven, into two helium atoms of atomic weight four. That is, whenever a lithium atom captured one of the high speed hydrogen particles, having an atomic weight of one, it broke down into two helium atoms.

It is to be observed that in all the transmutation experiments, physicists have only succeeded in transmuting heavier elements into lighter elements. There has been no synthesis of lighter elements into heavier elements. It seems improbable on the basis of modern astronomical evidence that physicists will ever be able to synthesize matter, to construct the heavy and more complex atoms out of the lighter and simpler atoms. The course of the evolution of matter seems to be in one direction. It involves the breaking up of complex atoms into simpler atoms and energy. Physicists may hasten this disintegration in some atoms but they are not likely to be able to reverse the cosmic process of atomic decay.

This last point leads to the question of the liberation of atomic energy. The radioactive disintegration of heavy atoms like uranium and radium releases energy. It was, therefore, assumed that all atoms contain a store of energy which would be released when they were broken up. But to break up the nuclei of the lighter elements has been found to involve an expenditure and not a release of energy. Only if the lighter elements could be synthesized, that is, if helium could be built up out of hydrogen, would there be a release of energy. However, this apparently runs counter to the physical scheme of things. Lacking the enormous temperatures and pressures of the interior of the stars, it seems fairly certain that the splitting of atoms will release energies insufficient to warm even an unemployed "rugged individualist".

2.

This conclusion is important in a consideration of the future

sources of energy. The natural resources of energy, coal, petroleum, timber, water-power, etc. are limited. Due to capitalist waste, many natural resources will be exhausted within half a century. Only the planned exploitation of natural resources such as is carried out in the Soviet Union, plus the utilization of new resources such as reversible oxydation processes, tidal energy, solar energy, etc. will adequately supply the energy needs of future society.

Such a procedure is impossible under capitalism. In the first place all present sources of energy are recklessly wasted by big capitalists in order to gain quick and easy profits. Secondly, the solution of such problems as discovering and tapping new sources of energy involves the closest cooperation between industry and science, and between scientists and the masses of the population. It requires research on a planned national scale. Science must be put on a basis of large scale production. It must be organized like planned industry, using collective organization of labor, subdivision of work, specialization, rationalization, etc.

None of these things are possible in a capitalist country. Under capitalism, science cannot solve the most fundamental problems of mankind. It cannot even apply its knowledge to thousands of technical problems of mankind. It cannot even apply its knowledge to thousands of technical problems quite realizable within the present scope of technology. This is due to an increasing contradiction between the advance of science and technology and the decay of capitalism. There is an ever widening discrepancy between the achievements of science and technology and their applications to industry. It has been estimated that 90% of the possible applications of science to industry are not used, because they threaten the domination of vested property interests. In the 10% of cases that capitalism does not apply science to industry, the results are overproduction and unemployment, the inevitable consequences of scientific advance under capitalism. In turn, unemployment and overproduction lead to economic crises which check the development of technological progresses and the application of new scientific discoveries to industry.

Even under the best conditions (the United States in the 20's) science under capitalism leads to increased pressure by big business on the working class and poor farmers, and the expropriation of small producers. Under Socialism, however, science aids society in overcoming nature and is itself given unlimited possibilities for development.

3.

An example of the inability of science to develop fully under capitalism is given by the growth of the electrical industry. Electricity has brought about almost another industrial revolution. There is in the application of electric power the possibility of remaking the industrial world, of decentralizing industry, of increasing labor productivity, of multiplying leisure. Under capitalism the development of electricity has followed the pattern of steam. It has been used to pile up profits, to increase waste in industry, to strengthen the big financiers and industrialists, to exploit workers, technicians, and scientists. The whole power industry in the United States is an example of the racket on a gigantic scale involving wholesale robbery and corruption.

In the Soviet Union electrification is being accomplished without the capitalist by-products of waste, graft, and exploitation. From 1920 when the Goelro plan for the electrification of the Soviet Union was drafted under Lenin's initiative, there has been sensational development and progress in the electrical industry. In 1932 seventeen billion kilowatt hours of power will be produced. By 1937 one hundred billion kilowatt hours will be produced. The total capacity of the country will be 22.7 million kilowatts. All the large plants will belong to a single high voltage network giving fifty-five hundred kilowatt hours for each kilowatt of capacity as compared with three thousand hours in the United States and twenty-two hundred in Germany.

The electrification of the country will involve the development of many new techniques and inventions in boilers, generators, turbines, cheap fuels, new insulating materials, etc. These will make possible the electrification of the entire Soviet Union in the shortest possible time. Transportation, industry, and agriculture will be electrified with subsequent profound changes in the whole scheme of production. The mechanization of processes and the automatization of control will eventually reduce the working day to two hours or less.

A Worker Writes: FELIPE YBARRA

THE PECAN SLAVES OF TEXAS

Maurice Torres, father of four American-born children, a pecan cracker by trade, works from 1 A. M. till 2 P. M. every day in the week but Sunday. That day he only works from 6 A. M. to 9 A. M. In a whole week he cracked seven hundred pounds of nuts at thirty cents per hundred. Saturday afternoon he receives his pay envelope with \$1.50: the sixty cents balance has been left in trust with the boss until next week.

The pecan crackers are considered the aristocrats of the trade, for it is the hardest and most dangerous work in the industry. I asked him whether all the crackers are making so little.

"Some of them are making still less," was his answer. But if one is fast and experienced and works from 1 A. M. till 6 P. M., and if the pecans are large, and there are plenty to crack, a man can crack from 1500 to 1800 pounds per week, so under very good circumstances a good cracker can make \$3.75 a week. But this combination of number one pecans, and plenty of them, happens very seldom; usually the pecans are number three which are very small.

There are about one hundred fifty or more hell holes called pecan factories, scattered all over San Antonio in the Mexican neighborhoods among the Mexican workers. You can find them in every other block, operated by ambitious greedy foxy tricky Mexican businessmen, who are really nothing but imitations of the Americans of that class. Wages hardly keep body and soul together, but there is a little trouble about hours. We have a law in our great state that you can't work a woman longer than nine hours. Though you can pay her as little as you wish. As it does not pay the big fellows to get in trouble with the law, they give the work to a Mexican sub-contractor, and both of them are satisfied—the big boss at getting the work done cheaper, and the Mexican contractor at paying the workers exactly half the price of a big factory for from 12 to 18 hours labor a day.

Several years ago they paid the shellers twelve cents for halves and ten cents for pieces. Today most of the cockroaches are paying two cents for halves and one cent for pieces. A smart Mexican worker was right when he told me the other day with a smile on his face that, if it keeps up this way, the workers will soon have to pay the bosses for the privilege of working and being squeezed out like a lemon. The fastest, most experienced girl can shell about ten pounds a day, of which six pounds will be halves, and four pounds pieces, so that at very best all she can make in a day is sixteen cents.

But not all the girls are experts. Very few of them can work fast for the simple reason that they eat such poor food and all of one kind. All the average girl can shell is three to six pounds a day: I am leaving to your imagination how much she makes a week.

I am enclosing the pay envelopes of the Chavez sisters. Maria Chavez, number eleven, received \$1.07 for a whole week; Tomassa Chavez, number thirty, \$1.11 for a week. Maria received only seven cents for a day's work. Both are young American-born girls. You can easily get a young girl to be good to you here for the price of a cheap pair of stockings, or a good young woman to live with you as common law wife for the price of a square meal a day.

Tomassa Macias, a young smart American-born girl, works in a pecan factory as a *limpiadora* (to clean the nuts you must be fast and have very good eyes) five days a week, from six in the morning till seven at night, with only a half hour for lunch and one day in the week from six to six. Wages \$3.00 a week. I asked her why she doesn't quit the job? "Father is out of work, the children are little, I must, must work to help save them."

Margaritta Flores is a worker forty-nine years old, but looks not a day younger than seventy-five. A proud father of four American-born children of four to fifteen years. An ex-miner with references from several bosses, stating that he has been a good dependable, honest, satisfied slave. With his wife and two of his boys, twelve and fifteen, whom he took out from school to help him make a living, he works six days a week from 6 A. M. to 6 P. M. shelling pecans. Working all week, all four of them shelled 109 pounds at three cents a pound. Saturday the proud

father received the family's pay envelope with \$3.27. Out of this he must pay rent for a shack, buy provisions for the six of them, pay insurance, pay the collector from whom he bought something on the installment plan, buy tobacco for him and his wife, support the Catholic church, and save up a few dollars for a rainy day.

I ask him how does he manage to get along on those few miserable cents? He notices that I am surprised, and thinks that I pity him, feels himself insulted, humiliated, ashamed, gets haughty and answers angrily, "Don't think that we always made so little. Not long ago all of us made as much as five dollars a week. That was pretty good money. But now the pecans are small, very small, times are hard, competition is big, the boss is greedy and smart, takes advantage of all the workers and cuts, cuts deep the price of the work. The most all four of us can shell in a day is 14 to 18 pounds at three cents a pound." I dare to ask him again, how can he be satisfied with so little? Hasn't he got a little ambition? And does he not expect a little joy out of life?

He answers, "Everything is from God. God is big, God knows what He is doing. We can't and shouldn't question God. He makes us to suffer for our sins. Those who are suffering here will enjoy life in heaven."

I feel that I am getting hypnotized. I pity him and his fate and his God and I respect his ignorance which is not his fault. Yet I feel I despise him, this victim of religion, and I hate, hate our cruel and insane system, and its organized Catholic church that makes grown-up people idiots, and good honest workers willing and satisfied slaves. But I feel, too, that it is my duty to help, to tell, to teach, to explain, to show, to prove to him how he and his children are being abused, mistreated, robbed of their health and sense.

He gets friendly with me, gets a little confidence in me, introduces me to his wife. She invites me inside their shack, a room 10 by 12 with three windows, though none of them has curtains of any kind, only the front window is covered up with a piece of wrapping paper. Two thin rusty iron beds, one has a cheap old broken spring, the other boards instead. Neither has any mattresses, sheets, pillows, or quilts of any kind, only rags. No chairs, no table, no carpets, no linoleum. On one of the walls, three enlarged family pictures, cheap imitation work, cheap frames, an old German clock, a few old rags on one of the walls that used to be coats or pants—and the most prominent corner of the room dedicated to the Mexican Catholic saints. I ask him whether he is a Roman Catholic? He is surprised at my question, and answers, "Si, Senor! Si, Senor! Look over there. See how many saints we have got." I step over to the shelf which takes up one-third of the space in the room, and there are the Virgen de Guadalupe, Senor San Antonio, Santo Nino de Atocha, Perpetuo Socorro, Virgen de Dolores, and some more saints of which neither one of us knows the names.

He shows me a hole that he and his wife call a kitchen, a wood stove in one corner, a pile of wood in the other, a bare homemade table in another. On the table a kerosene lamp, and all the kitchen utensils they have got and use.

He and his wife explain to me how they exist on the \$3.27 they make a week: one dollar a week rent for the shack, one dollar for provisions for the week for all six of them, fifty cents to the collector, twenty-five cents for wood for the week, twenty-five cents for the *limosna*, Sunday in the church. Anything left over is for kerosene, *tortillas*, clothes, and milk for the two smaller children.

"My credit is good," he tells me independently. "If I or my wife are in need or short of anything in the middle of the week, the corner grocery store extends me credit of as much as a dollar with confidence."

As I go out of the shack I can't forget their faces. I feel guilty, dizzy, cranky, miserable—all the shame of our cruel insane shameful capitalist system, of which I am a little cog myself. And I feel I must promise myself that my knowledge, education, (as little as I have got), ambition, thoughts, health, freedom, even my life does not belong to my family, but to all misfortunate, abused, ignorant victims of capitalism and its religion.

BOOKS

Toward Soviet America

Toward Soviet America. By William Z. Foster. International Publishers. \$1.50.

In a year of national election, which also happens to be the fourth year of the crisis and a year of general wage cuts in basic industries, *Toward Soviet America* assumes a historical importance. On the eve of the greatest strikes and other struggles it becomes increasingly essential not only for the workers, but also for their sympathizers among the intellectuals, to understand with the greatest possible clarity the message which they have sensed in Communism. Therefore, Foster's book is first and foremost a direct and simple exposition of the aims of the Communist Party of the United States.

Were it no more than this, it would be sufficiently important but it goes further. It indicates the immediate tasks of the Party which is the historical leader of the working class—the immediate tasks of this historical period.

Marxist in method, it analyzes not only "what is the matter with capitalism", but the success of the Soviet Union in a period of world crisis—the wiping out of unemployment, the progress in "catching up with and surpassing" technique and production in capitalist industry and agriculture, and together with these technical triumphs, the virtual creation from the ground up of a new proletarian culture. These things have been achieved under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

In this crisis how has listing capitalism attempted to right itself? By curtailing production and throwing out of employment millions of productive working people, by paring down the niggardly "relief" that it is forced to give to save its face and stave off revolt, and by direct attack, by shooting, jailing, deporting—by terror. These miracles have been achieved under the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie.

Foster demonstrates the truth of Varga's statement that "each cycle (of crisis) is at the same time a step in the history of capitalism, bringing it nearer to its termination." "So far, in fact, has this general trend gone", says Foster, "that the world capitalist system can be said definitely to have entered its period of decay. Capitalism no longer has to deal simply with cyclical crises. . . but a growing general crisis, political as well as economic, which marks its decline as a world system."

Over-expansion of industry, chronic industrial stagnation, permanent mass unemployment, the choking of international trade, the breakdown of the medium of exchange (with more than half the capitalist world off the gold standard), the development of fascism, the birth of a new social system are here analyzed as the more conspicuous of the manifestations of the growing general crisis.

What, then, does capitalism turn to, with the failure of its ridiculous "plans". War! For smitten with the fear of its death when it sees the steady triumphant march of Socialist construction in the Soviet Union, it plots the destruction of the birth-land of Socialist society.

Particularly able in its clear marshalling of facts is the chapter on Capitalist Attempts to Liquidate the Crisis—the rationalization of industry, the driving down to rock-bottom of working class standards of living, the hurry and scurry of capitalism and its apologists to find bits of temporary patch-work, the development of the reformist and socialist trade union movements into a fascist organ of repression and intensified exploitation of the working class.

We see the leadership of the American Federation of Labor take as its main tasks, the orders of the employers—the defeat of the workers for unemployment insurance and relief, the success of the wage-cutting campaign, the preparations for imperialist war, the effort to beat back the advance of the Trade Union Unity League and the revolutionary minorities in the reformist unions.

We see the socialist party, internationally, as well as in the United States, assuming as its special task the discrediting of the

Soviet Union among the workers, "covering their sophistries with a cloak of pseudo-Marxism". Foster does not resort merely to name-calling to prove the social-fascists as the main allies of capitalism. The practices of the Social-Fascists themselves are the best proofs. And those masters of the art of demagoguery, the "left" (as they like to call themselves) wing of social-fascism, the Musteites, Trotskyites, Lovestoneites, are also exposed—by their own actions.

"The workers must and will take the revolutionary way out of the crisis. At the present time they will carry out a militant policy to defend their daily interests, and finally, following the example of the Russian workers, they will abolish capitalism and establish Socialism."

But the capitalist system will not automatically collapse. The capitalists will not of their own free will give up control of society. They will not quit under "an avalanche of ballots" as the social reformists would have the workers believe.

"To put an end to the capitalist system will require a consciously revolutionary act by the great toiling masses, led by the Communist Party; that is, the conquest of the State power, the destruction of the State machine created by the ruling class, and the organization of the proletarian dictatorship."

Without a fight the ruling class will never surrender. The path of class struggle is the way out of the crisis. On that path the workers will carry on their day to day struggles against the capitalist attacks on their standards. On that path will occur great mass strikes, great struggles of the unemployed, great working class economic and political manifestations.

What will the general structure and working of the Soviet regime in America? This is the subject of the final chapter of *Toward Soviet America*.

"The American revolution, when the workers have finally seized power, will develop even more swiftly in all its phases than has the Russian revolution. This is because in the United States objective conditions are more ripe for revolution than they were in old Russia."

The industrial base for Socialism is already at hand in the highly industrialized United States. The workers' great problem is to seize political power. The Russian workers, in addition, had to build a gigantic industrial system.

"When the American working class actively enters the revolutionary path of abolishing capitalism it will orientate upon the building of Soviets, not upon the adaptation of the existing capitalist government."

Under the American Soviet Government:

Local Soviets, the base of the whole Soviet State, will be established in all cities, towns and villages. They will be combined by direct representation into county, state and national Soviets.

The American Soviet Government will join the other Soviet governments in a world Soviet Union.

The courts will be class courts, fighting the class enemies of the toilers.

The American Soviet Government will be a dictatorship of the Proletariat. The government will form an alliance with the poor farmers, will cooperate with the middle farmers, and will war against the big landowners.

With the intellectuals and the petty bourgeoisie in general the government will be friendly and will cooperate, except with elements which support the old order.

The Red Guard, which the workers will have organized even before taking power, will become the strong Red Army of Soviet America.

The Communist Party will lead the Revolution in all its stages. Capitalist parties will be liquidated.

The whole purpose of the Soviet Government will be to advance the welfare of those who do useful work.

The State will take over all industry, transportation, etc.

In agriculture there will be an early confiscation of large estates, forests, etc.

In finance the banking system will be nationalized and concentrated around a central State bank.

The capitalists will not be remunerated for their property and industrial undertakings. Norman Thomas, see *America's Way Out*, proposes that the workers *buy* the industries and land from the capitalists!

The divorce between culture and technique characteristic of bourgeois society is impossible under Socialism. The tremendous cultural achievements of the Soviet Union have kept pace with its technical accomplishment. Foster forecasts the same development for America.

NATHAN HONIG

Herbert Hoover - Racketeer

The Rise of Herbert Hoover, by Walter W. Liggett, The H. K. Fly Co., New York, \$3.50.

The Strange Career of Mr. Hoover, Under Two Flags, by John Hamil, Wm. Faro, Inc., New York, \$3.75.

The Great Mistake, by John Knox, National Foundation Press, Inc., Washington.

The White House Blues, by Felix Ray and Howard Brubaker, Vanguard Press, New York.

Hoover has a message for the 12,000,000 unemployed in the present crisis: "The only real and lasting remedy for unemployment is employment." Further, the great economist and statesman has said, "But for our sound policies and wise leadership, conditions in America today might have been similar to those in most of the rest of the world . . . we are on the road to the greatest period of economic well-being since the beginning of civilization." Thus spake Nero, and also Nicholas Romanoff.

Hoover's story is by Alger—a poor orphan making his way to fame and fortune. A wonder-boy real estate salesman who got to college by taking his confiding victims on bus rides and lunches while they viewed his assorted California properties. When he got through Stanford, he wrote English so badly that his graduation had to be framed. He knew geology well and mining not at all, but he promoted most of the business on the campus, from laundry to sports. Connecting after an interval with British mining promoters who sent him to Australia, Herbert advanced rapidly, owing to his mastery of unscrupulous, slave-driving, stock-rigging methods. He learned quickly that the promoter, not the producer, made money fast; indeed, this became his specialty. As he was to phrase it so happily a few years later, he was interested in "the great science of getting the most money out of some other human being", or—to put it less subtly—selling securities, and the less secure the more money. This statement was made in 1904, but lest it be deemed mere chance, let us quote him in 1912: "... this £800,000 of capital in the hands of the insiders is often invested to more reproductive purposes than if it had remained in the hands of the idiots who parted with it." In 1918 when Senator Vardaman attacked the war profiteers, Hoover answered indignantly, "Do you dispute the right of a commercial interest to make its pre-war normal profit?" And to show that throughout the years Herbert Hoover preserved inviolate his ideas on the subject, we shall have reason to refer again to them in the course of his Belgian relief, food administration, etc.

But to resume to his career. After making good—and plenty—in Australia, he was sent to China on big time. He left with a cool half million or more and the reputation as one of the slickest agents imperialism then had in the business. A year before the turn of the century he was occupied in swindling the Chinese, taking from them the famous Kaiping coal mines and the port of Chin wang tao for the British. He frustrated the attempt of the United States to regain control of the Kaiping property in Tientsin and had the concession handed over to the British. Later he was able to invoke "those abiding satisfactions which inevitably come from all unselfish efforts in behalf of our common country and our common humanity."

Hoover had been transferred to the management of the Kaiping coal mines because of his proven incompetence as a prospecting engineer, although he had already made himself a great reputation in that field. He used contract labor, paying 20 cents a ton for coal he sold at \$16 a ton. Of the workers he said, "The disregard for human life permits cheap mining by economy in timber and the aggrieved relatives are amply compensated by the regular payment of \$30 per man lost." Three years later our humani-



Linbach (John Reed Club of Cleveland)
"WHAT I CAN'T STAND IN THE COMMUNEISTS IS THEIR MATERIALISM."

tarian again reminded the world that "men are cheaper than timber."

A word or two more on the fellow's labor record. In Australia, in 1897, while the gold miners were starving he tried to cut wages and break strikes, and to import Asiatic contract labor; actually he brought in Italian and Austrian contract labor. Reminds us of the 1929 promises not to cut wages, and of Injunction Judge Parker. He instituted spy systems and blacklists—and spared timber. Hsi partner in China and in the Belgian relief business later and in present business ventures, Francqui, was of a similar type: as an officer in the Congo he was responsible for torturing, maiming and killing the natives to keep them in subjection, and to increase profits.

When the Transvaal gold mine owners tried to reduce costs by importing Chinese slave labor they spent much time and money in publicizing the idea. Hoover's firm had mines there, and a year before the contract labor ordinance was passed and sanctioned by the British Parliament (1904), he had already arranged to sell 200,000 Chinese workers to the African operators. He had 50,000 of them shipped, his Chinese company having a monopoly of the selling and transporting at \$10 a head and \$25 for passage. His ads for recruits were such obvious fakes that even Lloyd George denounced them in Parliament as "fraudulent". The workers were lured to a stockade at Chang wan tao, imprisoned there and shanghaied to South Africa. They were shipped on iron tramp ships which could not legally hold over 1,000 men. (A fellow director was the ship-broker). But the wonder-boy found they could hold 2,000 and the slaves were delivered to his manager, Honald, later one of his "relievers" in Belgium.

The first shipment was of 2,020 Chinese workers and peasants on the S.S. Ikbal, June 30, 1904, on a month trip with a midsummer temperature of over 100 degrees. Fifty-one Chinese died on the way, but Hoover made more on them dead than alive—he had insured them for \$125 a head. In Africa they were finger-printed and shipped in sealed cars on a 30-hour ride to the mines.



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They worked at sinking shafts, constantly in water, with the nights bitter cold. They received 25 cents a day, not enough, according to Hamill, for a pack of cigarettes. They were fined, flogged and tortured on any pretext and were treated as a combination of peon and slave. The Hoovervilles he advertised in those days as "garden cities" were compounds enclosing huts into which the workers were packed. When the ordinance was repealed, Hoover's company tried to sell these Chinese workers to the Kaiser for his colony in South West Africa. In the words of a great humanitarian, "there is in every civilized people an abiding faith in fair play, in common honesty."

As to the business side of the Chinese episode, it is fairly well known by now. It was one of the neatest deals ever put over by an imperialist agent without benefit of missionaries. Let us limit ourselves to statements by the judge in the case and by our hero. The British judge who heard the Chinese suit for return of the property, stated, "Incidentally, it appears by a letter of Mr. Hoover of March 22, 1901, that he actually took possession of some of the title deeds of the property by main force . . . such a flagrant breach of faith as, in my opinion, could not be tolerated by the law of any country . . . His Excellency was induced to execute the transfer . . . by fraudulent representations contained in a letter of Feb. 9, 1901, from Hoover . . ." Now let us hear Hoover, unfortunately later: "Our whole business system would break down in a day if there were not a high sense of moral responsibility in our business world, moral and public obligations upon the profession of the mining engineer . . . fair dealing American individualism . . ."

Or let us consider Belgian relief. Liggett, a true liberal, calls it Hoover's "one apparently unselfish undertaking", then goes on to show how relief was diverted to the German army, and at tremendous profits, even gifts being sold. That Francqui had Ambassador Page fix Hoover for the job is asserted by Hard ("Who's Hoover?"). That Hoover and his silent partners made millions on the business is shown by the British Foreign Minister, Grey, in a letter to Hoover of Feb. 22, 1915. That Hoover and the gang conspired with the Germans to have Edith Cavell shot for exposing the relief racket that was helping the Allies lose the war is charged by Hamill and hinted at by the *London Times and News* of Oct. 22, 1915. Hoover practically admitted the diversion of relief in a meeting with Lloyd George at which he reports the latter as saying that "we were giving the Belgians more food resources with which to stand requisitions in food by the Germans. We were directly prolonging the war."

Hoover sold the Belgians—and Germans—rotten food at war-time prices, reaping enormous profits from its purchase, shipping and distribution. For example he bought wheat in the United States at \$1.00 a bushel in 1917, and charged Francqui \$3.86 and \$4.89 for it; corn at 60 cents up to \$4.38, bacon and lard at 10 cents a pound, and charged over 35 cents for them, and similarly with meat, sugar, coffee, rice, etc. And Francqui resold to the Belgians at another large profit. Hoover paid his shipping partners \$7 a ton for freight and charged it on the bills at \$15; swapped and rechartered steamers, some of which never sailed—and all the time could have used ships requisitioned by the Belgian government. But then his friends Grey, Rickard, Brown, Barnes, etc. did the buying in the U. S. and the shipping.

The swindler was uneasy about this record, for he said "Some swine, some day, somewhere, may say that we grafted this money." So he arranged for a system of accounting, ". . . such *glass pockets*, that nobody can ever harbor a suspicion of our honesty." (Earl Reeves, "The Man Hoover"). As late as 1925 he was still hopeful of hiding the truth: he praised the bookkeepers who labored so that "our honor and the honor of our country should never be challenged." Reeve explains the entire matter, however, to the vindication of Hoover: "But the Germans couldn't understand it. 'What do you Americans get out of this?' an officer asked. Hoover glared at him for a moment, then: 'It is absolutely impossible for you to understand that anyone does anything with disinterested, humanitarian motives, so I shall not attempt to explain.'" Elsewhere Hoover said, "It was one of the most unpleasant things I ever had to do in all my life. But you can't be a quitter." Quit millions?

How Hoover and his assistant Gregory helped overthrow the Hungarian Soviet regime and instal Horthy has been told by the latter in *World's Work*; Hoover was past master of such manoeuvres by then. For us it is more important to recapitulate some of his Russian relief, especially with a new Japanese-Franco-

Anglo-American war against the U.S.S.R. well under way. From early 1919 Hoover's relief, followed the White armies, the Poles, Finns, etc. feeding them "children's relief" as they attacked the Bolsheviks. Kolchak, Denikin, Yudenich, etc.—all received relief. While Pilsudski was sending 700,000 men into Russia against the Soviets, Hoover was pouring \$90,000,000 into Poland to "relieve" the Polish children—in the Army. When the Poles were routed the ARA and American Red Cross helped the Russian children by evacuating or destroying all supplies as the Poles retreated. Only when all efforts to "relieve" the Russian people of the Bolsheviks failed did Hoover go in for real relief—though for the same purpose. Senator Reed charged in the Senate that tens of millions of Congressional relief funds were being "spent to keep the Polish Army in the field." Of \$95,000,000 of Central European relief funds reported by Hoover to Congress as spent by the end of 1920, practically every dollar was used to fight the Soviets. Incidentally, Polish soldiers armed with U. S. Army rifles, dressed in U. S. uniforms, using Hoover relief, carried on pogroms against Jews in Minsk, Vilna, Warsaw and many other cities in Poland, Lithuania, etc.

Liggett, who has an interesting chapter on Hoover as food dictator of Europe, shows how the food blockade against the Central powers was continued for half a year after the armistice and was lifted only when revolution threatened to spread over the Continent. Virtually Hoover's first step on reaching Europe in December, 1918, was to announce that 14,000 tons of food would be shipped to Finland to Bloody Mannerheim to support an attack upon Soviet Russia. Other Baltic states were blockaded by Hoover's supreme economic council because they did not join in. The German, von der Goltz, was allowed to capture Riga six months after the armistice and to execute thousands of Letts as Bolsheviks; later he backed Yudenich in the attack on Petrograd. The *New York Times* of Dec. 22, 1918, spoke of sending 200,000 tons of food and other supplies "to follow the armies of occupation" and of "considering increasing the armies of occupation" in Russia as "recommended by Herbert Hoover". Mannerheim was supported by a united front of German and Allied imperialists headed by Hoover, as the leading representative of American capitalism. Wilson left his Russian policy in Hoover's hands, and the latter persuaded him to send American armies against Soviet Russia. In June, 1919, Hoover had eight ships loaded with 20,000 tons of food in the Baltic, awaiting the fall of Petrograd. The Red Cross, under the direction of Mr. Morgan's Mr. Davidson, was cooperating with Hoover's ARA. U. S. Shipping Board vessels, also "cooperating", brought army trucks and supplies to Yudenich.

As food administrator, Hoover handled \$7,000,000,000 of purchases; it is "pleasant and useful" to speculate how much was "overhead" profit, and how much downright graft. Hoover and his set had a lucrative time with sugar, for example, among other rackets. Sugar was jacked up to 30-40 cents a pound. The United States bought the entire Cuban crop in 1917, filling the warehouses on the Island and piling the overflow out in the rain. With the knowledge of American naval and other officials, Spanish ships "stole" hundreds of thousands of tons at night and shipped it to Spain, from whence it passed through France and Switzerland to GERMANY—while "we" were at war—and was sold for 30-60 cents. According to Knox, American ships returning from Cuba were forbidden to load this sugar, while the United States was "Hooverizing" because of its scarcity. Incidentally, it is shown by Knox and Liggett, that the meatless days and war bread were also a swindle, and the food pledges a form of notoriety racket for Herbert.

Fleishhacker, Armour, and other food merchants had been cronies of Hoover's in various mining deals, and he put their agents in charge of the various departments of the food administration. Barnes got the grain business; American Sugar Refining and Arbuckle ran the sugar section; the Big Five packers and the millers their end of the government, etc. Profits increased to 150 percent for the salmon packers (Fleishhacker canned salmon) to 300-400 for the meat packers, and up to 5,000 per cent for some of the millers. These \$1-a-year assistants of Hoover made a "legitimate" profit on invested capital, according to the "Chief", but he forgot to state that capital stock had been increased enormously when the war started, and huge loans were counted in. Hoover asked Wilson to suppress a report of an investigation of the Federal Trade Commission, stating it "would produce an absolute state of panic in the United States" if it came out. The

farmers were bamboozled out of billions and often sold below production costs for the benefit of the grain speculators, packers, millers, and Hoover's friends among the Allied governments.

In addition, Hoover gave General Electric "the air". They received the monopoly of radio broadcasting, not merely because our Secretary of Commerce believed in monopoly capitalism in the most literal sense, but because he fixed himself and company in the process. He had supervision of the Patent Office and gave his friends radio patents on which they made millions. Friend Rickard was made president of the Hazeltine and Latour Corporations, that hold 236 patents, with 121 more pending. He, in turn handed out a monopoly of the postage meter business to Barnes, Rickard, Shattuck (and Hoover), that later purchased control of stamping vending in Britain. In 1921, Hoover, Rickard, Shattuck and Barnes organized the Intercontinental Development Corporation, to control the *Washington Herald*, and a number of paper, linen, and other companies. They are also tied up with the J. Henry Schroeder Banking Corporation, with Lee Higginson (correspondents of Krueger and the Guarantee Trust Co.), United Fruit and International Railways of Central America, with rayon trusts in half a dozen countries and paper and power companies in proportion; with Con Gas, with Con Edison and Peoples Gas (both Insull), Pacific Gas and Electric, etc. Hoover's business partners have a large interest in many of these companies and control a number of them, some doubtless, for him. If you ever come across the names of Edgar Rickard, Prentiss Gray, Edwin Shattuck, or Julius Barnes, in this country, or John Agnew in England, sniff again and smell Hoover. The gang's hangout when in town is 42 Broadway—which, strangely enough, is Mr. Hoover's New York address. This is a mere fraction of the record. Liggett says that he is the first to concede that Hoover "did accomplish widespread important reforms within the Department of Commerce". He standardized one-inch boards, bricks, and interlocking directorates. Anyone making a detailed study of his super-salesman activities in promoting American business abroad is likely to find that he gave special attention to those the gang were interested in (fruit, cocoa, sugar, oil, etc.)

Which brings us to Teapot Dome. The original Teapot favorite was not Fall, not Harding, Daugherty, etc., but Hoover. The oil interests backed him for the cabinet before they did Harding. Liggett merely mentions this fact, letting it go at that, but Hamill spills the story. Hoover had appointed as head of the oil division of the Food, and later of the Fuel Administration, Mark Requa, who had been with Doheny for half a dozen years, and with Sinclair. He it was who fixed the leasing of the government oil lands at Elk Hills and Teapot Dome.

A word on Hoover's love for labor and then we shall conclude with some reference to the man as politician—of especial interest in view of the coming elections. Hoover suppressed the Wickersham report on Mooney and Billings, although Liggett is authoritative for the statement that he has privately said they were innocent. With regards to freeing Debs, Lincoln Steffens reports that Hoover told him, "I personally think they ought to take out the son-of-a-bitch and string him up to the first lamp post." His Quaker heart must have beat with particular piety that day. Let us note, in passing, that in 20 years residence in London he was never known to attend a Quaker meeting, and that he broke off relations publicly with the American Quakers in 1921 in an attempt to smash their Russian relief work. But by 1932 he had acquired a "deep appreciation of the importance . . . of the service of the churches in the spiritual life of the nation." Lo, he got religion upon the threshold of presidential politics.

After he had been built up as a humanitarian and efficiency man, and his desire to become a university president was supplanted by his ambition to become president of the universe, he suddenly ceased to be a Britisher, and became a Democratic-Republican. In the 1919 Michigan primaries he ran on both tickets. Only a year before, Fess, who now regards him as a madonna, had called him a prostitute. His nomination in 1928 was put over by Vare—who is to politics what Hoover is to business—and his election by the KKK, Mabel Willebrandt, the bootleggers and bigots of the country, not to mention the bankers and industrialists. He won the election in a campaign which Liggett characterizes as "the most nauseous and utterly dishonest canvass ever conducted in the history of America." Surely, a large bill to fill. But as Crother sweetly adduces, Hoover's is "a practical idealism, beyond the touch of sordid political influences."

These books, except Brubaker's, to a certain extent, supplement each other. Liggett covers thoroughly what is for us one of the

basic phases of Hoover's activities, the part he played in intervention in Soviet Russia, in so called Russian "relief". He also gives us a comprehensive survey of Hoover's political and business career in this country and of his financial connections. Hamill is strongest on the Belgian relief episode and Hoover's record on labor, while Knox is good on his work as food administrator, especially with respect to the sugar trust. All three give detailed accounts of the Chinese deal which started the young man on his way as imperialist adventurer and millionaire at the break of the century.

Brubaker's book is clever, but wisecracking like a disillusioned Democrat about the last four years of misery is hardly current comedy. The book is punny from title to tail-piece, if that is humor.

A. BOSSE

YELLOW DOGS

The Yellow Dog Contract. by Elliot E. Cohen. International Pamphlets. 5 cents.

The Injunction Menace. by Charlotte Todes. International Pamphlets. 5 cents.

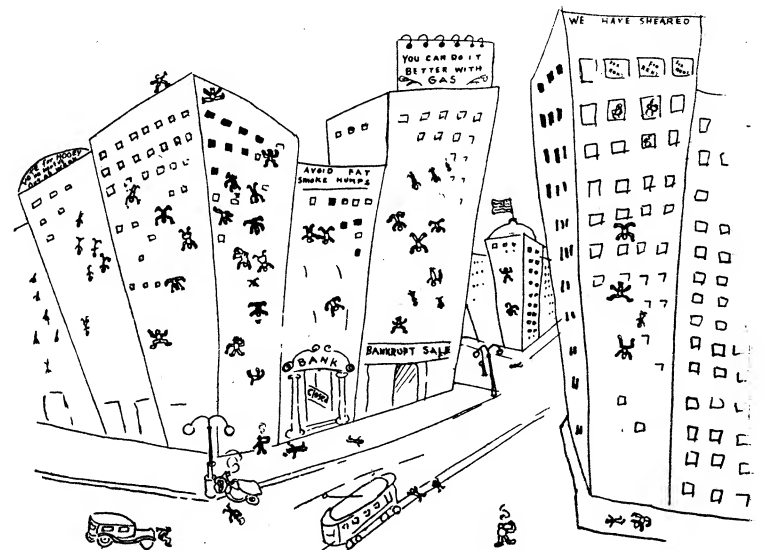
Machine guns. Armored tanks. Tear gas bombs. Clubs. Black-jacks. Gun-thugs. Spies. Fat-salaried American Federation of Labor officials. All of them like rapiers in the hands of the employers in their efforts to defeat the workers' organizations. But no weapon is sharper or more deadly than the piece of paper that gives the employer an injunction or a yellow dog contract against the worker.

The story of these pieces of paper is told vividly in two pamphlets, *The Yellow Dog Contract*, by Elliot E. Cohen, and *The Injunction Menace*, by Charlotte Todes, prepared under the direction of Labor Research Association and just published by International Pamphlets, the first of their series to sell at 5 cents apiece. Every worker and every friend of the workers will find good stuff for speeches, writings, debates and noon-day talks in these two 16-page booklets. The main points in the history of injunctions used against the workers are here in this brief space, and the explanation of the yellow dog, the different kinds and how they are used.

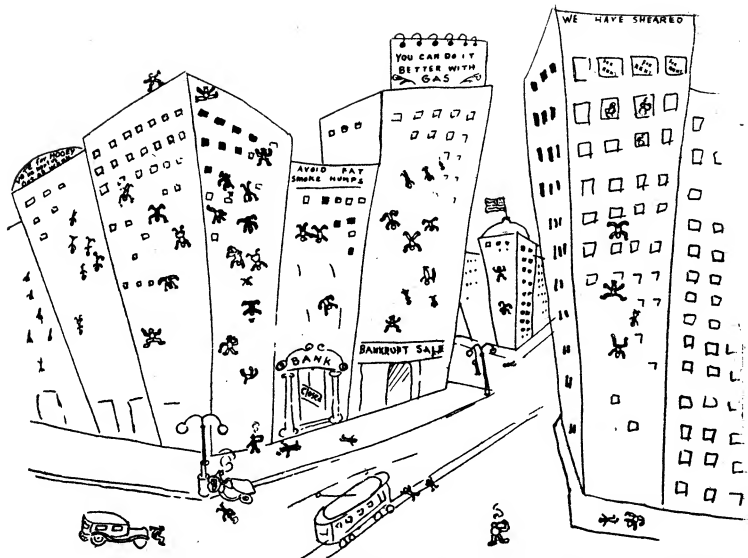
Charlotte Todes has reason to know the anti-labor injunction at first hand. Active in the Food Workers Industrial Union and editor of the *Food Worker*, she saw A. F. of L. officials take out the injunction, that weapon of the employers, and use it against the Left Wing union in the strikes of 1930 and 1931. She has written of this and of other injunctions with a clear understanding of the class conflict and a picture of the workers' struggle as vivid as in her book, *Labor and Lumber*.

Elliot Cohen, Executive Secretary of the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners, shows up the yellow dog as worse than a rattlesnake. He ends with a statement of what workers can do in mass protest and militant political action against other weapons of the employers.

Grace Hutchins.



Gilbert Rocke (John Reed Club of Chicago)
IVAR KREUGER STARTS A FAD



Gilbert Rocke (John Reed Club of Chicago)
IVAR KREUGER STARTS A FAD

Escape to the Past

Conquistador, by Archibald MacLeish, Houghton-Mifflin, \$2.50.

After centuries of warring with the infidel Moors, a fanatically religious Spain had reared a military caste, secured itself nationally, but was economically impoverished. The socially productive elements, the Moorish farmers and artisans, had been conquered and expelled. What remained was a warrior caste, subject to their lord and king. With the discovery of the Americas, these battle-reared adventurers, searching for riches in the name of Christ and with the blessings of their pope, flocked to the new shores. And these soldiers, in their search for gold as savage as the barbarians they subdued, raped and massacred, conquered under the banner of the cross an Aztec civilization of a higher cultural order than their own. Royal Spain fattened and flourished on the pillage won with the cross-hilted swords of the conquistadors.

Conquistador is the narrative of one of these expeditions under Cortes. It is the story, in retrospect, of Bernal Diaz del Castillo, a participant, a man typical of his contemporaries, militaristic, narrowly religious, superstitious, proud, cruel and lustful. The tale ends, in MacLeish's poem, with the destruction of Tenochtitlan and the massacre of the Aztec Indians.

MacLeish writes:

"And our wounds we laid in the ravel of torn sleeves

Larded— so did we lack of all things—from dead men."

After an encounter with Indians, Diaz writes bluntly in his *True History of the Conquest of New Spain*: "We halted for the night near a brook, and dressed our wounds with the grease we took out of a fat Indian who was left on the field."

The warrior Diaz becomes an aesthetic personage sensitive to the subjective experiences of the author, MacLeish. In his mouth appear the beautifully written, subtle sensations of MacLeish's individuality:

I here in the turn of the day in the feel of

Darkness to come now: moving my chair with the change:

Thinking too much these times how the doves would wheel at

Evening over my youth and the air's strangeness:

Them arching singing in sunshine: the showery land:

The quick loves: the sleep: the waking: the blowing of

Winds over us: all this that we knew:

All this goes out at the end as the flowing of

Water carries the leaves down . . .

There appear, also, the images of T. S. Eliot, sounding the same futile despairing note of a man dissatisfied and disillusioned with contemporary life:

. . . And there rains are dry and the sounds of their leaves

fallen . . . As the light in America comes: without leaves

. . . Strangers will dig my grave in a stony land . . . An old

man in a hill town a handful of dust under the dry grass

at Otumba . . . Old are the gods there:—Utter the dry bones

their unspoken names . . .

And of the uprising of the poulace of Tenochtitlan, their revolt against the butchery of their number at a dance festival in honor of their tribal gods, against their compromiser and king, Montezuma, against the presence and god of the Spaniards; of the death struggle of the Aztecs in defense of their social order against the bloody intrusion of new social forces; of the fierce battling, the massacre and carnage of the final episodes, MacLeish concludes with a fatal, nostalgic note:

"Old . . . an old man sickened and near death:

And the west is gone now: the west is the ocean sky:

O day that brings the earth back bring again

That well-swept town those towers and that island."

For MacLeish, history is a T. S. Eliot monologue, it is the flat wash for his watercolor verbiage, his landscapes, seascapes, night-scapes and self-escapes from reality.

As a result of the psychical and physical lethargy of the decadent middle class environment in which the bourgeois intellectual finds himself today, the middle class intelligentsia resorts more and more to the past. There it stretches for the heroes and romances, for the values it fails to discover in its dying social order. It is a sort of nostalgia for the unsophisticated youth of capitalism, the capitalism of brutal industrial progress and napoleonic splendors. It is the yearning of decadent bourgeois sophisticates for a simpler life, more direct, primitive, heroic, in anticipation of its new sensory and aesthetic pleasures. It is analogous to the delights Ernest Hemingway a convert to Catholicism and a contemporary of MacLeish, takes in bullfighting. (Hemingway quotes

Gertrude Stein in a dedication to his book *The Sun Also Rises*: "We are all a lost generation.") It is analogous to Stuart Chase's discovery of Mexican peonage as a Utopia, to T. S. Eliot's conversion to Anglo-Catholicism, and the already jaded craze for Negro life, primitive art and jazz.

Of a sincere artist, and we do not doubt MacLeish's sincerity, his audience has the right to demand that he correctly attack and solve the problem and subject matter he has undertaken. Otherwise, what the artist works out will be an invasion, will lack vitality and offer nothing vital to the reader. This lack he will try to make up by fine writing, he will repeat the technique and imagery he has perfected as an expression of himself in previous work—an admission of failure in dealing with his new material.

MacLeish's early work, with the exception of *Happy Marriage*, reflects T. E. Eliot's technique and influence. In his book of poems, *Newfoundland*, Mac Leish perfected a method much more sensitive to the twilit sensations and emotions to which he attaches poetical values, the turning of a leaf in the wind in autumn, reactions to nature, love and self, interpreted by a morbid, wistful individual. Descriptions of nature, conglomerations of objects and sense objects, are used to define the emotions of men and events here. This method is natural for the author's personal observations but it comes into conflict with the harsh atmosphere and action of the *Conquistadors*. The feminine run-over endings of lines, the hidden assonance and rhyme, the under-emphasis, subdue the rich active material of the *Conquest*.

It is this method and approach to history that reveals the limitations of Archibald MacLeish as an artist, as the representative of the class views of the bourgeois intelligentsia; and the failure of the middle class in a period of dying capitalism, of imperialist wars and proletarian revolutions, to nourish its artists on the true substance of reality, instead of the holy waters of mysticism and the intoxicant spirits of the past.

S. F.

The Revolutionary Present

Unrest, 1931, Edited by Jack Conroy and Ralph Cheeney. Henry Harrison, New York. \$1.75.

In America our plutocracy holds the power and our middle class does the talking, writing, theorizing, "educating". We have middle class economics, middle class sociology, middle class art, both as to production and as to audience, and plutocratic patronage for all three. It is annoying to insist on such commonplaces. It is even more annoying to point out that recently it has become apparent that the only sociological and economic syntheses which correspond at all closely with current reality are revolutionary syntheses.

But art, at least, is above the battle? Why should it be? Has it ever been? And finally, as a matter of fact, what does the current evidence show?

This "Unrest" anthology, the third to be issued, is such evidence. It has been almost wholly ignored by contemporary middle class criticism. The writer is just naive enough to take it seriously, and to predict that next year, and in the years to come, our middle class critics will have to take it seriously. So will our middle class artists. If and when the contemporary fact is revolutionary, art will be obliged, in Whitman's phrase, to "vivify the contemporary fact", or else write, paint, compose, and build—nonsense. Indeed, the break has already occurred. Intellectuals like Dreiser, Anderson, and Lewis are steadily "withdrawing their allegiance". Others, like Dos Passos, no longer practice withdrawal, but are engaged in a deliberate and strenuous fertilization of the perverted social body.

Is this merely prejudiced "wishful" thinking? I doubt it. Does this collection of revolutionary poetry, inexperienced and "unprofessional" for the most part, warrant such a harangue? I think it does. Read it. Apply not the slide-rule of a middle class "aesthetic" but the stethoscope of feeling, and here are some of the things you find:

That discounting the percentage of minor mediocrity which is always unimportant, irrespective of the artist's social orientation, there is fully as much sound poetry, as poetry, in this collection as in any of the recently issued middle class anthologies.

That some of the best poetry, as poetry, is written by genuine

proletarians, and that the "revolutionary culture" which they express is beginning to be rather convincing.

That Sherwood Anderson signalizes his surrender of the "individual", the "self", and his acceptance of the machine by writing the only good poem of his I have ever read.

That other middle class renegades such as William Ellery Leonard and Lola Ridge are at their best in this volume.

That practically all this work is worlds removed from the pre-war social sob stuff which Margaret Widdemer, Gellett Burgess, and Louis Untermeyer (yer, read 'em and weep) used to contribute to the old *Masses*.

Keep those mouldy literary chromos in mind while you read this piece by Joseph Kalar, whose overalls would look terribly out of place at a meeting of the American Poetry Society—for that matter, who doesn't look out of place at a meeting of the American Poetry Society?

PAPER MILL

*Not to be believed, this blunt savage wind
Blowing in chill empty rooms, this tornado
Surging and bellying across the oily floor
Pushing men out in streams before it;
Not to be believed, this dry fall
Of unseen fog drying the oil
And emptying the jiggling greasecups;
Not to be believed, this unseen hand
Weaving a filmy rust of spiderwebs
Over these turbines and grinding gears,
These snarling chippers and pounding jordans;
These fingers placed to lips saying shshsh,
Keep silent, keep silent, keep silent;
Not to be believed, hardly, this clammy silence
Where once feet stamped over the oily floor,
Dinnerpails clattered, voices rose and fell
In laughter, curses, and songs. Now the guts
of this mill have ceased their rumbling, now
The fires are banked and red changes to black,
Steam is cold water, silence is rust, and quiet
spells hunger. Look at these men, now,
Standing before the iron gates, mumbling,
"Who could believe it? Who could believe it?"*

Well, what's the matter with that? It would seem that Mr. Kalar has not merely read something but been somewhere. And as I contemplate the future of American poetry, I, for one, would rather bet on Mr. Kalar than, say, Archibald MacLeish.

I could quote a dozen other proletarian pieces by Frederic Covener, Henry Flury, Norman MacLeod, A. B. Magil and others; not quite so good, perhaps, but almost. Next year's crop will be better; read MacLeod, Aunt Molly Jackson, Whittaker Chambers, H. H. Lewis, Langston Hughes and others in the *New Masses* if you don't believe it.

In conclusion, one should speak of derivations: every sound critic must know his derivations. As far as I can make out, much of this stuff seems to trace back to one Bartholomeo Vanzetti, who appears to have lived and written, in 1927 or thereabouts, some major poetry. It is all very obscure and unfortunate. As the illiterate Kentucky grandma remarked after hearing for the first time the sad story of the Christian Man-god: "Let's hope it ain't so." Because if it is so, I doubt that our middle class aesthetes will be able to stand the strain.

Contemporary schools of middle class poetry are feverishly engaged in building "aesthetics" out of mutually exclusive negatives which annihilate each other very satisfactorily—witness the recent still-birth of "Humanism". In due course, they will doubtless annihilate revolutionary poetry on the ground that it is "propaganda"; what they write will of course not be propaganda. And as what the revolutionary poets write becomes increasingly a "vivification of the contemporary fact"—for facts grow and change and poets change with the facts—what then?

You see the logical dilemma in which we are landed. It all arises from my insisting on this business of classes, which no sound professor of literature even mentions. I am a middle class person myself, and I probably wouldn't be writing this way if I hadn't just been re-reading Marx and Lenin, when everybody knows those ignorant propagandists have been annihilated time and time again. Maybe some bright young pedagogue will step up and annihilate me. It won't be the first time, nor, I hope, the last.

JAMES RORTY

The Inkless Revolution

The Readies for Bob Brown's Machine. Roving Eye Press, Cagnes-Sur-Mer, France.

Pay attention, comrades. There are revolutions and revolutions. Some them, the literary ones, are taking place under our very noses, and we cannot even smell them. Or can we?

"Revolutionize reading", says the manifesto of Bob Brown, "and a Revolution of the Word will be inklessly achieved". The idea comes from Paris this time, not Rapallo or Riga and Bob Brown is the blushful inventor of a "reading machine" that will enable us to acquire culture at a very rapid rate, for "our potential consumption of words through all the senses is terrific", not to say terrifying. "Perhaps", says Brown, "words may be tasted and smelled someday in addition to being seen, heard and felt".

In an anthology designed to show you how it all works, Lawrence Vail obligingly lists some necessary bric-a-brac for the interior of any uptodate lunatic asylum, as follows: "farchitecture—moosick—mewsick—hooturism—rearalism—frothels—sinemas—not-abilities—sellabrittles—Krankusi—Androgydes—Ra-ra Ezra—Ritz Carlton Reedy," and others that must be consumed in order to be appreciated. Other contributors are represented, who put Gertrude Stein and the old *transition* gang to shame. Marinetti in Italy gives vent to: "Destruction of syntaxes. Wireless imagination. Geometric and numerical sensitivity. Words in rowdy freedom . . . It is she this fragrant high nymbly ovidal volume of cool pink milky perfumes with above 3, 6, 9 spirals of extract of vanilla", very alluring indeed in a country of Prohibition and AlCapon-ism. But I'll take mine with strawberry.

Bob Brown's statement of how he was converted to the "Readies" provides excellent clinical material for an understanding of the lives of these rootless, psychopathic expatriates. "I had to think of the reading machine because I read Gertrude Stein and tape-tickers in Wall Street . . . I've tried to explain to dullards before and it makes me mad if they don't understand . . . I wanted to be a great writer and a rich man . . . I was almost a book myself . . . The war came along and I did nothing about my machine except try to explain it to an occasional friend . . . For a living, I dealt in rare books. I bought (a book) for two dollars and sold it for fifty . . ." And now this tickertape-reading Mr. Brown, who can boast of having been a contributing editor of the old *Masses* (maybe that was what was wrong with it,) is intent on selling his "idea" to America's intellectuals. Harmless enough, you may say. But not if you understand the inherent viciousness of such "dilettante" tactics of evasion. Manuel Komroff, who represented one of the few dissenting voices in the anthology (the rest were the usual run of faded pansies, venomous fascists, thrill-hunters and defeatists, even including several misguided young "left-ists") said: "through it all, you spit on your tin whistle and fifeing in agony—through it all, you spit on your tin whistle and fife me a little tune that says no more than Yankee Doodle".

But if Komroff thinks that Yankee Doodle or the Reading Machine bear no relation to the contemporary struggle, then the previously mentioned Mr. Vail, in another of his orgasms, entitled "Program", has written in vain. He suggests that we "club lowly Loeb—manhandle Mendelsohn—pop off Oppenheim \$ \$ \$ let Roth rot—rub out Rubinstein—jam Jews—kick Kike—gip Yit", and presently, after he has read this review, must surely add: "ex-pectorate on Spector". Or perhaps, "krush Komroff". All of which is admirable self-exposure in a volume that purports to be "a preview of a revolutionary event in literature". Of my own contribution to the anthology I am much too modest to speak, except perhaps to say that the gist of my message is contained in two lines:

*"as the english sparrow lightens the labors of streetcleaners,
so the wordie-birdie makes freud obvious . . ."*

However, it is indeed a surprise, and a not very pleasant one, to find the following from the pen of Norman MacLeod, former editor of *Front*, *Morada*, associate editor of *Left* and others:

*"tomorrow-i-will-repeat-Red-orgiastical-with-padres—
calling-one-girl-to-another-in-midnight-confessional—
and-little-enough-the-seeds-springs-in-to-being-go—"*

and from another editor of *Left*, Jay du Von, this riotously juicy bit:

*"BREASTS-CURVING and-now-DRUNK-with-IVANOV and-
RAOUL-TALKS-of-mexico and-SHOWS-his RING . . . and-YOU-are-ASLEEP-in-my-arms"*

Nerts . . .

HERMAN SPECTOR

Where Is Dr. Counts?

*Dare the School Build a New Social Order? By George S. Counts.
John Day. \$0.25.*

Originally a follower of John Dewey, Professor Counts, deriving impetus from radical social doctrines buried in his master's theories, has begun to outstrip him. His latest publication proclaims a break with liberal "progressive" and "experimental" educators. Man is not born free, Counts contends, but into a determining social milieu. The child is born not "good" but "a bundle of potentialities," and there is no good individual apart from the conception of a good society. The child does not live in "a world of his own;" despite minor conflicts, in a proper society "the youth repay in trust and emulation the protection and guidance" of elders. Education is no pure mystical unchanging essence; what has been called Education with a capital E is really "American education with a capital A and a small e." Education should not produce agnostic intellectuals; freedom is not perpetual suspension of judgment but capacity to decide and act. The school cannot be impartial; pretended impartiality piles obscurantism on indoctrination.

Counts is attacking the illusions "of the liberal-minded upper middle-class . . . who are fairly well off, who have abandoned the faiths of their fathers, who assume an agnostic attitude towards all important questions, who pride themselves on their open-mindedness and tolerance, who favor in a mild sort of way fairly liberal programs of social reconstruction." These people wish their children "to succeed according to the standards of their class . . . not to mix too freely with the children of the poor or of the less fortunate races . . . not to accept radical social doctrines." They want education to deal with life, but with life in a highly diluted form. Thus Counts bares the seamy emotional overtones of "progressive" pedagogical formulations, labeling them "a confession of complete moral and spiritual bankruptcy." He rattles the skeletons in the closets of "advanced" centers of bourgeois moral and cultural decay, engaged in mass production of divorce, social-parasitical, alcoholic, neurotic and psychopathological cases.

To traditional *laissez faire* dogma in education, Counts opposes the proposition that indoctrination of pupils is inevitable, necessary and desirable. The school must shake off the culture of a bankrupt class, face social issues squarely, come to grips with life, "establish an organic relation with the community, develop a realistic and comprehensive theory of welfare, fashion a compelling and challenging vision of human destiny," and lose its fear of indoctrinating. Only by shifting the center of orientation from the child can the school help lift him out of the "morass of moral indifference," free him from the "senseless struggle for material success," and challenge him to "high endeavor and achievement."

If the school, building as well as contemplating, is to make society its focal point, it must "impose" its concept of society on pupils. To define the concept, Counts examines broad political and economic issues. Characterizing capitalism as cruel and inefficient, he demands its replacement or a change so radical "that its identity will be completely lost." Individualism is doomed. The choice is between two "collectivisms," one essentially democratic, serving the people, the other feudal, serving a privileged class. Concentration of economic power in a small class being inconsistent with any democracy, Counts, as a democrat, hopes for "democratic collectivism." This "vision of what America might become" he urges teachers to make the "supreme imposition" on their pupils, warning them that neutrality is practically support of reaction. "The real question is not whether imposition will take place but rather from what source it will come," he writes. He warns teachers that if they wish to use "progressive" schools against conservatism and reaction, if they wish to coordinate education with the "living and creative" social forces, they must face the opposition of powerful humbugs who have hitherto flattered them. They must "throw" off completely the "slave psychology that has dominated the mind of the pedagogue more or less since the days of ancient Greece." They must organize. They must bridge in their own lives, at the risk of reputation and fortune, the existing gap between school and society.

The thought is generally abstract, the language often platitudinous or fuzzy, the frequent use of "we" in speaking of the moral bankrupts puzzling. Counts' appeal to the "people" rather than to the workers; his idealization of the "peculiar national genius" of America and of "glorious adventure"; his description of the

new state as one based on many things but not on workers' power, are perhaps unhappy by-products of a not useless effort to translate technical Marxist terms into pedagogues' lingo. But there are more serious differences between Counts and the Marxists. While Counts says that the dispossession of vested interests "may", as in the past, require force, he seems to argue that "a bold and realistic program of education" would head off struggles "terminating in revolution and disaster." If "democratic collectivism" means Communism, the substitution is impossible and belief in it a misleading illusion. Education cannot be a panacea, as Counts says at one point only to forget later on.

Counts is to date not a Marxist and not a revolutionary. He is the honest bourgeois technician who resents the hypocritical patronage of philistine "big shots" and even more the impossibility of freely exercising his technical function and pursuing his technical interests in capitalist society. He wants a new deal. But, being unready to abandon belief in democracy and abstract moral virtues, he tries to transvaluate them, calling for a revival and application of "genuine" American democracy. He is trying to swing from the capitalists' to the workers' side, but he wants to play his new role from objective, democratic, moralistic heights. He wants to think—the idea pervades the pamphlet—that teachers are somehow above the class struggle.

This is, of course, untrue. Teachers are affected by the struggle just as all technicians, all human beings are, and their activities are part of it, for good or ill. The honest technician cannot successfully combat this cramping social order in the rarefied atmosphere of transvaluated democracy and moral worth. He must not simply say, as Counts does, that "our schools, instead of directing the course of change, are themselves driven by the very forces that are transforming the social order." He must never forget that these are the forces of the class struggle, and that true freedom for the honest technician awaits the workers' victory. Until then, school reform, if possible at all, is capitalist reform because, as Counts recognizes once to forget in general, schools cannot lift society or even themselves by their bootstraps.

The question is not whether schools *dare*, but whether they *can* build a new social order. The schools of the capitalist world can not. They can at best be another arena of the class struggle, in which the honest teacher, as an ally of the working class, has the task of developing pedagogical technique which the workers' society will free him to utilize, and —of greater immediate importance—of winning adherents—not for "progressive" education, not for "genuine" democracy, not for "democratic collectivism," but for the Communist movement, the sole substantial bulwark against industrial feudalism, political reaction and cultural decay. Over the contending forces in the final and unhappily bloody struggle, there will not fly the banners of transvaluated technology, democracy and morality, but only the black fascist standard and the red flag of the revolutionary workers. Until a man takes his stand under the latter, we may appreciate his sympathies, but he is not one of us.

HENRY STORM

The Editors of

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Glenway Wescott Trembles

Fear and Trembling, by Glenway Wescott. Harpers. \$3.50.
Challenge To Defeat, by William Harlan Hale, Harcourt, Brace.
 \$2.50.

Here are two critical books, both the product of our present unrest, both the work of young men, Americans. The former marks an excursion into a new field by one who has already won considerable recognition as a novelist. The latter is the first book of a writer who has just entered his twenties.

There is not much that can be said about Glenway Wescott's opus—the best is that Wescott ought to have known better; the worst, that he doesn't know what he is talking about. The world today may give Glenway Wescott the shivers and shakes; his book gives us only the jimjams. Underthought and overwritten, sententious, sentimental, exhibitionistic, silly and even downright idiotic, it is the sorriest tripe we had ever feared to see clogging an otherwise skillful pen.

Boiled down to essentials, the 369 pages in *Fear and Trembling* tell us that we ought to be governed by the best minds and that war is hell. But why libel Satan and why not Mr. Wescott for our next republiedemocratic president?

Space does not permit us to quote freely from Wescott's innumerable grotesqueries; we offer a few as samples. Communism is "an Erl King's proposition", an "order conceived by that whiskery Jew from Trier and put in practise by that little Russian with the forehead like a large pearl"; its success means "grey tranquil existence spread all over the earth, nothing but labor humming in factories, fluttering in fields". (Fancy Wescott's Wisconsin farmers fluttering in the fields; they reap not neither do they flutter). "All class-antagonisms and class-idealism derive, not so much from the facts of economics, but from questionable idealism and the general evil in the modern conscience." "A great deal of the defence or aggressive championship of classes is but a perverse and hopeless form of individualism." "Many a poor father who objects to his master's last will and testament leaving a million dollars to his unattractive offspring, overlooks the fact that he himself is in a position to bequeath (from body to body) the glorious hoardings of the poor." (Said glorious hoardings being, item, "physical health"). "When our more beautiful and powerful women men start trying to enter into flattering relations with Madame Litvinova and Mr. Stalin; when our ablest men in large numbers . . . set out for the steppes . . . well, we shall begin trembling." Et cetera, und so weiter, ad inifintum, ad nauseam.

Mr. Wescott's grasp of world events is about as considerable as that of the average sophomore in a girl's seminary. All he needs for his shivers and shakes is a dose of quinine and to go to bed early.

Hale's book is a resume of the century that began with a (to a bourgeois mind) coordinate world in 1892 and ends with a bourgeois world in chaos in this year of grace. 1832 was the year of Goethe's death and the end of Goethe's century; 1932 might be characterized as the year of Herbert Hoover's coordination. Mr. Hale's book bridges this span, charts the history of modern man "in Goethe's world and Spengler's century", traces the "progress of unreason" and the "collapse of reality", challenges Spengler's "Decline of the West" with a critique of the German's historical philosophy, and looks forward hopefully to a "process of regeneration" and a "new age."

Culturally, says Mr. Hale, the last century was one of "Separation", whereas the coming era will be one of "Community". He looks forward to a period of "materialism in art" and "vitalism in science." These two principles are to be united through "a conscious use of mentality." And this conscious use of mentality centers about "the conception of humanism" (not Professor Babbitt's but Hale's). And Hale's humanism is "that broadly philosophic attitude toward humanity which unites the merely aesthetic and the merely scientific into a greater whole. It recovers the dignity of man . . . its general function is to bring the objective, scientific attitude into a true relationship to the individual; and to broaden the subjective, artistic attitude into a view of the abiding principles and truths that transcend the individual . . . This will be the humanism of tomorrow."

Well, maybe. It seems to us that Hale talks well, but that he is just talking. Any college professor can do that. But granting that all this is desirable—it is too vague to invite objection—how is it to be brought to pass? Surely not by talking in the dark

to keep one's courage up. It seems to us that Hale's book is very much in need of a sound materialist dialectic to transform his airy prophesying into a fighting faith. Otherwise his criticism, while it listens well enough, is apt to lack conviction.

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Woman's Road to Freedom

The Biological Tragedy of Woman, by Anton Nemilov: Translated from the Russian by Stephanie Ofental. Covici-Friede, \$2.50.

Anton Nemilov is a biologist who lives and works in the Soviet Union. Although the Soviet government is accused of suppressing all freedom of thought and hampering the development of science, it is interesting to note, (1) that the book under review was issued in several editions by a Soviet publishing house, and (2) that it was criticised in the Soviet press for being un-Marxian in its approach. This process of publication and discussion is normally called freedom of thought.

Nemilov presents the following thesis: in the human species the sex organs are more highly developed than in any other animal. At the same time, due to his brain development, man is not content to obey the laws of sexual instinct. In the case of woman, this biological "tragedy" is heightened by the biological division of labor which throws the burden of reproduction upon her, leaving her little of man's freedom. Because of this, woman enters social life with a physical handicap which can never be wholly overcome. Hence, even in the Soviet Union at the present time (Nemilov asserts), woman is handicapped, despite the great advances which have been made in improving her status since the October Revolution.

In presenting this general thesis, Nemilov develops both biological and sociological theories. Within certain limits, his biological theories are true. But in his desire to demonstrate the validity of his biological hypotheses, his account of the physiology of reproduction is vitiated by a metaphysical approach. The book contains such poetic metaphors as "the genius of the race" and the "lure of nature", taken from Schopenhauer's "Metaphysics of Love", which despite Nemilov's denial, he sets up as operating factors in biology and society.

In his treatment of the position of woman in society, Nemilov suffers from a form of "scientific conceit". He labors under the illusion that individual books by individual scientists can take the place of social forces in building up Socialist mores. Actually, in the Soviet Union, the interaction of the masses of the population and Socialist institutions have laid the foundation for a sex ideology based upon biological facts.

In the Soviet Union, woman is entitled to perform her biological functions without depriving herself of a normal social life. Women get three days leave of absence with pay during their menstrual periods. Pregnant women get six to eight weeks leave of absence with full pay before confinement, an equal period after confinement, and an additional eight weeks with pay if they require it. Abortions are legal and can be had by all women, depending upon their state of health, the number of their children and their economic condition. The Soviet labor code guarantees equal pay for equal work, for men and women alike. All avenues of social, economic and political activity are open to women on the same basis as men.

Nemilov cites these facts, but fails to draw the lessons of his socialist environment. To be sure, woman is burdened with bio-

logical difficulties from which man is free. She experiences about thirty years of monthly physical and psychological setbacks as well as definite illness when pregnant and giving birth. But the social scheme of things in the Soviet Union, in contrast to capitalist civilization, recognizes these biological handicaps, and by granting women special privileges and protection, enable them potentially to function as well as men in all spheres of social activity. If woman still lags behind men in the Soviet Union, it is because of the heritage of the preceding social system that was adjusted neither to her biological needs nor her status as a human being.

There is evidence that scientific research will steadily diminish woman's biological handicaps. Effective means to secure temporary sterility in women by comparatively safe measures are almost at hand. Harmless and temporary sterility by periodic interference with the processes of internal secretion point the way to a time when woman will be able to decide when to have children, without resorting to abstinence, injurious contraceptives or abortions.

In bourgeois society, women are neither biologically nor economically emancipated. They are objects of economic and sexual exploitation. Bourgeois morality is not only class morality, but even at the present time is largely man-made morality. The organization of bourgeois society is such that it manifests a strong bias in favor of man. The problem is much more complex than petty-bourgeois reformers think. It is not that woman has been subjected to man because of false mores, but that bourgeois society has so developed through the play of objective conditions, that to this day woman is restricted and condemned to a secondary condition in life. This is particularly true of working women and the wives of the workers and farmers and to a lesser extent of the lower middle class women. The emancipation of women is impossible without Communism. Only in an economic society where private ownership of property is abolished does woman cease to be property.

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or Pioneers

BATTLE IN THE BARNYARD; Stories by Helen Kay and pictures by Juanita Preval. Published by Workers Library Publishers, N. Y.

Here is a first-rate story book, a real book for Pioneers. The stories are good, the pictures are beautiful, and the appearance of the book is as handsome as one could wish. Here is type that is clear and simple, properly spaced so that it is easily legible by children not yet very used to reading. Here are pages that are examples of what can be done with good white paper and good black ink with a sprinkling of color and a lot of good taste. It is refreshing to see that an unassuming paper book can be so much more distinguished in appearance than so many pretentious ones.

The stories are by Helen Kay, an organizer of Pioneers. They are very entertaining; to my mind the title story and the "High-hat Ants" are easily the best in the book. But the others, simple anecdotes told in a lively manner, are not to be scorned. They are quite capable of stirring childish imaginations to questioning and discussion, as I proved to my own satisfaction when I tried them on my young neighbors.

The illustrations, by Juanita Preval, a sensitive young artist long associated with *The Workers Monthly*, *New Masses*, *The New Pioneer* and other workers publications, are really beautiful. The chickens around the pool; the child on the roof; the mass-meeting of ants around a green weed platform; the boy so touchingly making his agreement with his father, are all seen with real emotion and drawn with a fine feeling for their decorative value.

Whoever is responsible for the make-up of the book should be given further opportunities; real talent for composition is shown, all too rare in the publication of pamphlets and paper books.

More books like these, Pioneers, for the workers children and the workers who will enjoy reading them aloud to their children!

L. G.

Kreymborg the Infant

The Little World, by Alfred Kreymborg. Coward-McCann. \$2.00.

Alfred Kreymborg says sentimental things about a proletariat he cannot understand, and childish things about an economic system whose workings have never been quite clear to his beauty-fumbling, kindly eyes. If Kreymborg is to expand, he must cease

being garrulous about trivialities, he must break with the rottenness of contemporaries like Pound and Williams and go toward the objective in a literary sense with the singleness of purpose that characterizes the efforts of men like Dreiser and Dos Passos. Making whimsical comments on social phenomena is not enough: *satire* is needed, the thrusts of revolutionary criticism. Whether Kreymborg is capable of this remains to be seen. So far he has done no more than scratch the surface. His reverence for "leaders" in the abstract causes him to utter nonsensicalities about Lenin and the social-defeatist Ghandi. He mildly rebukes the American capitalist, suggesting that, if he would only put more fodder in the dinner-pail of the workman, he would see "more blue in his eye, less red". This is political infantilism, and Kreymborg is old enough to know better. At any rate, a short course at the Workers' School would certainly help this poet in the better organization of his material, and some personal contact with the day-to-day struggle of the worker will give it the necessary illumination.

HERMAN SPECTOR.

Paste

Semi-Precious Stones, by A. I. Voinova. Translated from the Russian by Valentine Snow. New York, Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith. 604 pages. \$3.00

An unimportant Soviet novel by an undistinguished Soviet author, *Semi-Precious Stones* ostensibly reveals the character of Okhromeshkov, an engineer who has an important position in a government office that is concerned with Russia's deposits of semi-precious stones. Like so many specialists employed by the Soviet Government, Okhromeshkov is a saboteur. Clever, unscrupulous, ambitious, he insinuates himself into the good graces of the naive and muddy-brained Communists, his bosses, and proceeds to wield his nefarious influence on their work and their personal lives. Okhromeshkov is one of the "monopolists of science and engineering"; he is an "unsurpassed cynic" revealing "a complete moral morasmus and an utter incapacity towards regeneration of any kind"; he is "the secret destroyer who works in the most delicate field of disintegration of the human mind and corruption of the coral foundations of our reality." The avowed purpose of the novel is—"to unmask him, morally to isolate him, and, as a source of contagion, to destroy him." The real purpose, however, seems to be a satire (a *subtle* satire, says the blurb) on Communism, on Sovietism, on Bolshevism, on everything in the new Russia. Accordingly, the book gives a gay picture of Soviet life: the Communists are honest idiots, the Soviet children are precociously nasty, the Soviet wives are notoriously unfaithful, the Soviet husbands are enviably polygamous, and the surviving Soviet intelligentsia is almost exclusively made up of rogues, prostitutes, lunatics, and ne'er-do-wells. In addition to all this we are treated to thrilling scenes of love and jealousy and hatred and murder. Subtle satire" indeed!

JOSHUA KUNITZ

IN THIS ISSUE

JOSEPH NORTH is the Editor of *Labor Defender*.

ROBERT KENT, in Leavenworth during the last war, is a member of the New York John Reed Club.

HARRY RAYMOND, member of the *Daily Worker* staff, covered the Bonus March for his paper in Washington.

OAKLEY JOHNSON is Secretary of the John Reed Clubs of the United States.

WILLIAM GROPPER is staff cartoonist of the *Freiheit*.

LEON DENNEN, critic, is a member of the New York John Reed Club.

DAVID RAMSEY is a scientist of note.

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